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ABSTRACT

This description and analysis of the lives of 32 young Comprehensive Employment and Training Act participants presents youth perspectives on the nature of the employment situation and the interacting factors which affect youth's employment chances, on the individual developmental process, on reasons for coming to and expectations of employment and training programs, on the experiences within these programs, and on success in as well as the subsequent effects of participation. It consists of eight chapters. Each chapter contains participant case histories and information on such topics as labor market institutions, employment problems, and program services. (Material presented is from the Youth Perspectives Project conducted from November 1978 to December 1979.) Chapter 1 contains background on the education and employment needs of participants. Chapter 2 discusses participants' family life. Community-related problems are examined in chapter 3, and school life is covered in chapter 4. Youth work attitudes and perceptions of the world of work are outlined in chapter 5. Chapter 6 covers job training and employment programs, and chapter 7 deals with career plans, life goals, and employment outcomes. A description of the Youth Perspectives Project and a bibliography are appended. (MN)

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YOUTH KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

RESEARCH ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Youth Perspectives—The Lives Behind the Statistics

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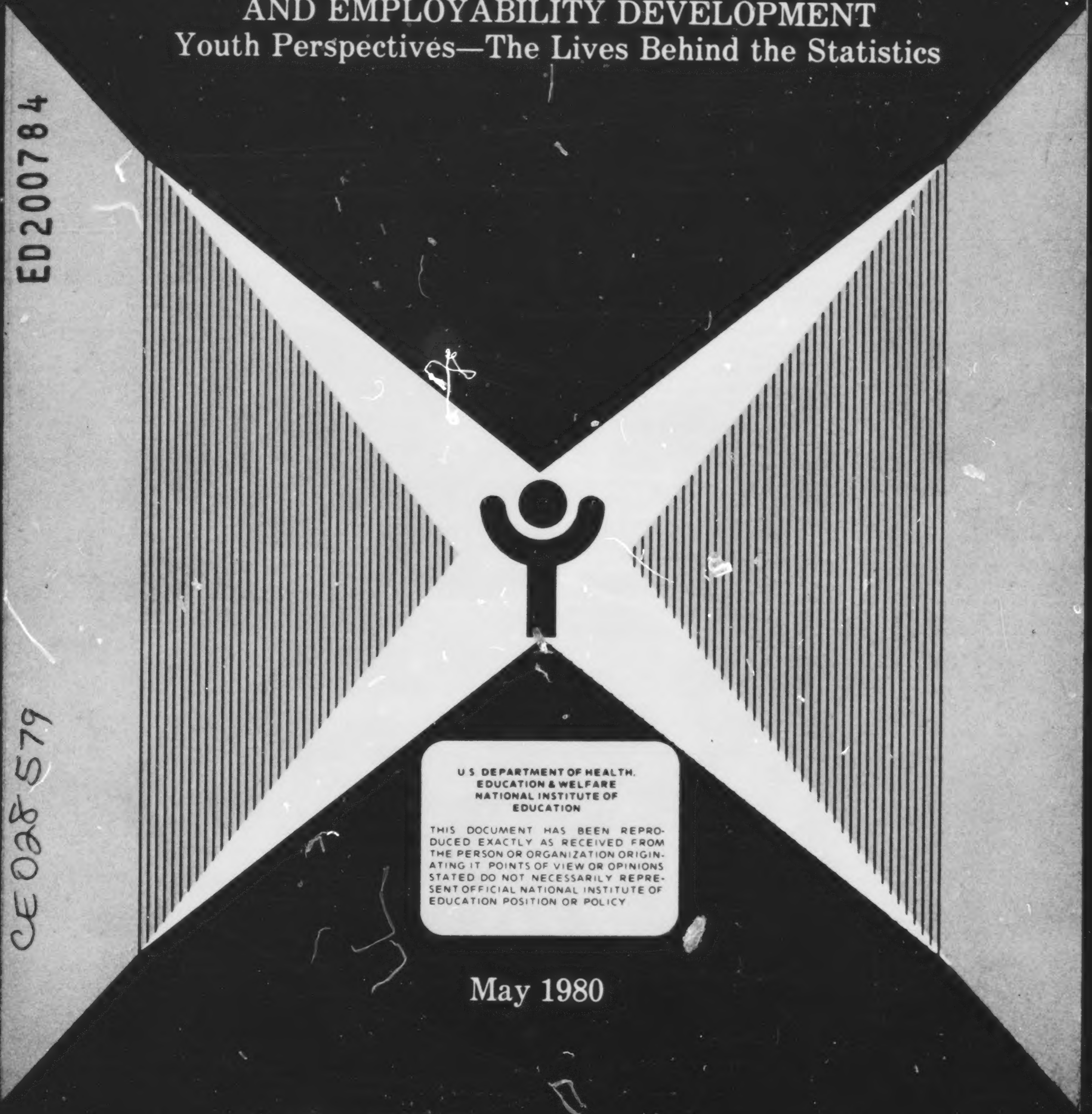

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May 1980

U.S. Department of Labor
Ray Marshall, Secretary

Employment and Training Administration
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YOUTH KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2.10

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES - THE LIVES BEHIND THE STATISTICS

Bonnie Snedeker

April 1980

OVERVIEW

This extraordinary description and analysis of the lives of 32 young CETA participants is one of several efforts aimed at determining youth perspectives on the nature of the employment situation and the interacting factors which affect youths' employment chances, on the individual developmental process, on reasons for coming to and expectations of employment and training programs, on the experiences within these programs, and on success in as well as the subsequent effects of participation.

There are several alternative approaches for determining youth perspectives on these issues. Youth can be surveyed in a quantifiable question-and-answer response format in order to get a sense of the incidence of viewpoints and the factors statistically correlated with these views. There are obvious response biases and difficulties in interpreting both questions and answers. For instance, even a simple determination of "program participation" is difficult for a youth who may have gotten an in-school job with no knowledge that funding was provided through CETA. Despite such limitations, standardized questions and large sample sizes are the only way to get a sense of magnitudes and statistical patterns of relationship.

Unstructured interviews can yield greater insight into individuals and their motivations but are much more difficult to generalize. The quality of the insights depends on the degree of rapport, the continuity of observation and the understanding of the observer.

It is possible to work in an interactive setting to try to develop consensus viewpoints of youth in task groups and discussion sessions. The success depends on the degree to which youth can be guided in discussions without dictating their views.

Finally, the "ethnographic" approach relies on observers of life experiences rather than on questions about these experiences. Obviously, it is a more intensive approach, with the danger of involvement contaminating responses, but it is also the only way to put certain life experiences into context.

With limitations in each approach, a balanced understanding of the youth perspective depends on a blending of the methods and synthesis of findings from their application. A structured array of activities have, therefore, been initiated under the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act to determine youth perspectives utilizing all these approaches.

Under the Continuous Longitudinal Manpower Survey and the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans, a variety of detailed questions have been addressed to large samples of youth concerning their participation in employment and training programs. An ethnographic study has been implemented to track a smaller sample of poor youth through all their life experiences.

The National Urban Coalition and the National Urban League have assessed the views of young people through guided interaction. The Coalition utilized the assemply format in several sites, while the Urban League selected and worked with a National Youth Participant Observer Committee over an extended period of time. Personal interviews were carried out by a number of athletes under the direction of the NFL Players Association as part of the background work of the Vice President's Task Force on Youth Employment. Finally, this volume was prepared, reflecting periodic interviews over a year with a selected sample of CETA youth participants.

Without question, this volume represents one of the most revealing and policy significant products of the youth knowledge development effort. Its description and analysis of the lives of young CETA participants gives meaning to most of the statistics and quantitatively based conclusions developed from other activities. Because it captures so well the diversity, complexity and dynamism which are frequently expurgated in more "scientific" analyses, the volume is not easily summarized. But there are several important underlying themes:

First, the cumulative effects of opportunity deficits and negative developmental factors become clear. Each of the individuals in this study,has by their teen,been formed by life experiences in a way which strongly affects, if not predetermines, subsequent experiences.

Second, there are clear sequences through which each youth has passed or is passing, but the routes and the speed vary dramatically.

Third, the employment and training experience is only one stepping stone in a continuing passage. In context of all that has happened before and is happening at each moment, programs and outcomes appear much less consequential. For some youths, they are the right opportunity at the right time, but for most, they are just one step, perhaps shortening the journey or redirecting it slightly, but not making major changes.

Fourth, youth turn to these programs because of the lack of more attractive options. They leave when something better is available or when participation is not fruitful. In none of these stories, can the employment and training experience be considered negative, even if the benefits in most cases are expected to be temporary. The youth are clearly better off having the opportunities.

Fifth, the enormous diversity is revealed in these individual profiles. Clearly, any conclusions about cause and effort relationships or program impacts which depend on characteristics which can be surveyed and quantified cannot get very far in explaining what is occurring in individual cases and what lies under the averages and trends.

This volume is one of the products of the "knowledge development" effort implemented under the mandate of the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977. The knowledge development effort consists of hundreds of separate research, evaluation and demonstration activities which will result in literally thousands of written products. The activities have been structured from the outset so that each is self-standing but also interrelated with a host of other activities. The framework is presented in A Knowledge Development Plan for the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977, A Knowledge Development Plan for the Youth Initiatives Fiscal 1979 and Completing the Youth Agenda: A Plan for Knowledge Development, Dissemination and Application for Fiscal 1980.

Information is available or will be coming available from these various knowledge development efforts to help resolve an almost limitless array of issues. However, policy and practical application will usually require integration and synthesis from a wide array of products, which, in turn, depends on knowledge and availability of these products. A major shortcoming of past research, evaluation and demonstration activities has been the failure to organize and disseminate the products adequately to assure the full exploitation of the findings. The magnitude and structure of the youth knowledge development effort puts a premium on structured analysis and wide dissemination.

As part of its knowledge development mandate, therefore, the Office of Youth Programs of the Department of Labor will organize, publish and disseminate the written products of all major research evaluation and demonstration activities supported directly by or mounted in conjunction with OYP knowledge development efforts. Some of the same products may also be published and disseminated through other channels, but they will be included in the structured series of Youth Knowledge Development Reports in order to facilitate access and integration.

The Youth Knowledge Development Reports, of which this is one, are divided into twelve broad categories:

1. Knowledge Development Framework: The products in this category are concerned with the structure of knowledge development activities, the assessment methodologies which are employed, the measurement instruments and their validation, the translation of knowledge into policy, and the strategy for dissemination of findings.

2. Research on Youth Employment and Employability Development: The products in this category represent analyses of existing data, presentation of findings from new data sources, special studies of dimensions of youth labor market problems, and policy issue assessments.

3. Program Evaluations: The products in this category include impact, process and benefit-cost evaluations of youth programs including the Summer Youth Employment Program, Job Corps, the Young Adult Conservation Corps, Youth Employment and Training Programs, Youth Community Conservation and Improvement Projects and the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit.

4. Service and Participant Mix: The evaluations and demonstrations summarized in this category concern the matching of different types of youth with different service combinations. This involves experiments with work vs. work plus remediation vs. straight remediation as treatment options. It also includes attempts to mix disadvantaged and more affluent participants, as well as youth with older workers.

5. Education and Training Approaches: The products in this category present the findings of structured experiments to test the impact and effectiveness of various education and vocational training approaches including specific education methodologies for the disadvantaged alternative education approaches and advanced career training.

6. Pre-Employment and Transition Services: The products in this category present the findings of structured experiments to test the impact and effectiveness of school-to-work transition activities, vocational exploration, job-search assistance and other efforts to better prepare youth for labor market success.

7. Youth Work Experience: The products in this category address the organization of work activities, their output, productive roles for youth and the impacts of various employment approaches.

8. Implementation Issues: This category includes cross-cutting analyses of the practical lessons concerning "how-to-do-it." Issues such as learning curves, replication processes and programmatic "batting averages" will be addressed under this category, as well as the comparative advantages of alternative delivery agents.

9. Design and Organizational Alternatives: The products in this category represent assessments of demonstrations of alternative program and delivery arrangements such as consolidation, year-round preparation for summer programs, the use of incentives and multi-year tracking of individuals.

10. *Special Needs Groups:* The products in this category present findings on the special problems of and the programmatic adaptations needed for significant segments including minorities, young mothers, troubled youth, Indochinese refugees and the handicapped.

11. *Innovative Approaches:* The products in this category present the findings of those activities designed to explore new approaches. The subjects covered include the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects, private sector initiatives, the national youth service experiment, and energy initiatives in weatherization, low-head hydroelectric dam restoration, windpower and the like.

12. *Institutional Linkages:* The products in this category include studies of institutional arrangements and linkages as well as assessments of demonstration activities to encourage such linkages with education, volunteer groups, drug abuse agencies and the like.

In each of these knowledge development categories, there will be a range of discrete demonstration, research and evaluation activities focused on different policy, program and analytical issues. In turn, each discrete knowledge development project may have a series of written products addressed to different dimensions of the issue. For instance, all experimental demonstration projects have both process and impact evaluations, frequently undertaken by different evaluation agents. Findings will be published as they become available so that there will usually be a series of reports as evidence accumulates. To organize these products, each publication is classified in one of the twelve broad knowledge development categories, described in terms of the more specific issue, activity or cluster of activities to which it is addressed, with an identifier of the product and what it represents relative to other products in the demonstrations. Hence, the multiple products under a knowledge development activity are closely interrelated and the activities in each broad cluster have significant interconnections.

The Lives Behind the Statistics is the first of two initial volumes on youth perspectives in the "research on youth employment and employability development" category. *Surveys of Youth* provides the products of an assortment of survey, ethnographic and guided interaction activities to determine youth perspectives. *The Findings of the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans*, also in the "research" category, present statistical survey results of critical importance as well. This volume, however, puts flesh on this statistical framework. It is a critically important and exciting work.

ROBERT TAGGART
Administrator
Office of Youth Programs

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I. WHO ARE WE?

Before I came here, I wasn't doin' nothin'. Stayin' out on the street, you know. Come in late every night. Wake up late every morning. I wasn't really interested in nothin'. I stealed weed. Rode around in stolen cars. Gettin' money never phased me. I could always get money from people I knew. You know, doin' certain things, you can always get money. But I got to thinkin', it was about time for me to get my education. Get in something. Either full-time working or going to school. I knew sooner or later I'd have to do something. I never really saw myself bein' one of those dudes just hangin' out.

Bobby Jones, Age 18

I sit home with my baby. And I don't like it really. I don't. If my boy friend don't come around, I never have nobody to be with. I don't never go nowhere. I've been lookin' for a job. It's hard to find. Since my son was born, I been living with my sister. I get some welfare, but it's no good. All my mother told me was to finish school. Back when she was young, you could get a job easy. But now it's getting where you need something--some education, experience--first before you can get a job. I wish I could go back. I'd be graduating this year if I'd stayed and stuck to it...if I didn't have a baby. But having a baby...it's a change, you know. It really is. Myself, I can feel that I'm getting older. You know, I'm out here on my own and everything. Trying to make it the best way I can. I just want to get me a good job. Then I want to get me a deposit for an apartment. And I don't want it to be too much longer.

Carmeletta DeVries, Age 17

I've worked before, but I don't have a job now. I can't seem to get a good one. See, I won't be 18 until next month, and they don't want to hire you under 18. I moved out of the house two years ago last January. That's when I got my first job. I was livin' with a bunch of friends, all together in an apartment. The job I got...you were supposed to be 18 to work there. Apparently, they just hired me 'cause they needed somebody right then. As soon as they got an application with somebody 18, they laid me off. I just kept lookin' for jobs on my own. Finally I got a dishwasher job. I thought that was great. I worked there about five months. But, uh, I don't know. I started to want a better job. I was makin' below minimum wage, and I was only workin' part-time. I don't think he was payin' us fair for the work we had

> to do. It really wasn't good at all. So I looked around tryin' to find a better job, or the same kind of job at a better place. I didn't have much luck. So I moved back home, and I didn't do anything till I came here.
>
> Jack Thrush, Age 17

> I want to work, but my education comes first. If you want to get anywhere, you have to at least graduate from high school. It's hard to earn money when you're in school. It depends on your schedule. Most places they want you to work more hours. Most jobs call for 18 year olds, and they want diplomas. For younger people, if you go to little restaurants, or like McDonalds and that, it's pretty easy to get hired. But it's not too good. You don't get anywhere with it. I want something better than that.
>
> David Anderson, Age 18

> I've traveled all around, but I haven't worked very much. Cuz most the time, I was living with a foster parent or with friends, and they were always tryin' to get me back in school. The only job I can really say I ever had was bein' a housekeeper for eight months for this one family. And I worked at Burgerville for about two days. I always had it in mind to work, but I didn't have any skills. Didn't know what I wanted to work as. I learned how to get by out on the street. But working...I just plain don't know very much about it. I don't know what I could do with myself once I had the skills.
>
> Sandy Bonds, Age 18

Bobby Jones, Carmeletta DeVries, Jack Thrush, David Anderson, and Sandy Bonds are not their real names, but the statements are those of real people. Bobby lives in a public housing project in Boston. Carmeletta and Jack live in Kalamazoo, Michigan. David lives in a group home in rural Kitsap County, Washington. Sandy Bonds lived in five different states before she decided to settle down in Portland. These young people have never met, but they have more in common than age. They all wanted to work, but they were unable to find satisfactory employment on their own. They are only a few of the more than three million young Americans who were unemployed in 1978.

By 1978 youth unemployment was not a new problem in the American economy. For nearly three decades, unemployment rates for young people had continued to rise despite private efforts and government programs. In the 1950's, unemployment rates for teenagers averaged 11.4 percent. Teenage unemployment increased to an over 14 percent average in the 1960's, and between 1970 and 1978, the unemployment rates of teenagers continued to grow to a nearly 17 percent average. These increases in youth unemployment were linked to population trends. The 1960's and 1970's saw massive growth in the teenage and young adult population as the post-war "boom babies" matured. As the number of people age 16 to 24 increased by 80 percent between 1962 and 1978, the number of new job-seekers entering the labor force also increased. During a 15 year period, employment participation for this age group grew dramatically, particularly among part-time student workers and young females. But the economy was unable to fully accommodate the increased demand for jobs among teenagers and young adults.

Who has borne most of the burden of youth unemployment? A small proportion--about 10 percent--of the youth population are experiencing 15 weeks or more of unemployment each year. Between 70 and 80 percent of the total weeks of youth unemployment are borne by this group of longer term unemployed. Bobby, Carmeletta, Jack, David, and Sandy were all members of this group. The concentration of youth unemployment seems to be increasing. It's victims are largely the economically disadvantaged, the non-white, and the high school dropout. In March 1978, the unemployment rate of economically disadvantaged white youth was 25.5 percent. Poor black youth experienced nearly 41 percent unemployment during the same period. Such dramatically high rates may actually understate the extent of joblessness among the poor and non-white. Many low income and minority young people who want to work have become discouraged from looking for jobs. The employment-population ratio for poor youth in 1978 was 36 percent compared with 64 percent for non-poor youth.

Reduced income and less work experience are the direct effects of youth unemployment. Other effects are more difficult to document, but unemployment can also have a negative impact on the social behavior of youth and on their long-term career prospects. Longitudinal studies are yielding evidence that the inability to find and maintain employment while young affects one's employment and wages in the future. At a special disadvantage are those discouraged job seekers who are not in school and also remain out of the labor force altogether during their teenage years. Linked to worsening youth employment prospects, though causality is difficult to establish, are growing levels of adolescent parenthood, welfare dependency, criminal behavior, alcoholism, and suicide among the nation's youth population--particularly among the poor. Teenagers who have become parents, who have committed serious crimes, who leave school without basic skills, or who have become dependent on drugs or alcohol must overcome special barriers to enter the productive labor force and maintain stable employment.

The enactment of the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 (YEDPA) marked the beginning of a Carter Administration and Congress supported attack on the problems of youth unemployment. YEDPA was passed as part of the Carter Administration's economic stimulus package, and its immediate goal was to reduce the intolerably high levels of teenage unemployment, particularly among disadvantaged and minority youth. In addition, however, it also sought to stimulate changes in the roles of educational and labor market institutions to promote better preparation for and entry of youth into the working world from both the educational and economic perspective. YEDPA, in effect from fiscal year 1978 through fiscal year 1980, represented the most comprehensive initiative in a succession of federal efforts to improve the employability and employment prospects of youth.

Though Bobby, Carmeletta, Jack, David, and Sandy were economically disadvantaged and lacked the skills or credentials that might make them attractive to a prospective employer, they were more fortunate than many unemployed teenagers. During the 1978-79 school year, they were participants in new programs authorized under the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act. As YEDPA participants, they received paid job experience, educational instruction, and career information and counseling services designed to meet their immediate work and income needs and improve their long term employment prospects. These services were provided to them in their own communities under the auspices of local Comprehensive Employment and Training (CETA) systems.

This book is about Bobby, Carmeletta, Jack, David, Sandy, and other young people trying to establish themselves in the world of work. It is based on case studies of 32 participants in YEDPA programs. The collection of case study material was part of the Youth Perspectives Project, which I conducted, from November 1978 to December 1979, under the direction of the National Council on Employment Policy. Funds for the project were provided by the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.

During eight months of periodic interviews with case study participants in four geographic locations, I spent hundreds of hours listening to young people talk about their lives, employment experiences, problems, and plans. They shared their views on themselves, their families, communities, schools, and program activities. This book is their story. The messages in it are based on their experience and, when possible, told in their words.

This book is also about programs. It is written for policy makers, administrators, and planners as well as those who intend to work directly with youth participants in employment and training programs. In addition to descriptive case histories of participants, the book provides information and background on labor market institutions, employment problems, and program services, but it is not an evaluation, a policy prescription, or a blueprint for program design and operation. It introduces the reader to participants as people, and it examines youth employment and training issues from a participant perspective.

Why do some young people need help making an effective transition to the labor force while others are successful in finding employment on their own? How do young people get involved in employment and training programs? What do they expect to gain? What happens to them after they enroll? What kinds of things do participants learn in programs? Does participation help them to make a better transition to the working world? These are some of the issues addressed in this book.

Case studies can provide substantial insights on people and processes; they do not offer conclusive evidence or prove theories. A large body of statistical data is being collected and analyzed on YEDPA program activities. This book looks at some of the people and situations behind the statistics. The scope of its findings is circumscribed by the range of experiences, characteristics and views that are encompassed in a limited number of case studies. The final product is also influenced by my own perspectives, research objectives, and limitations.

Though I did not come to this project with a professional background in adolescent development, family relations, social psychology, or education, as a researcher, I was concerned with the whole lives of participants and the ways in which YEDPA participation fit into and affected their lives. During the case study interviews, attention was focused on participants' individual development, family, community and school experiences as well as their program activities and career prospects. As a writer, my perspective remains that of a person who has studied youth employment problems and policies and come to the conclusion that the complex circumstances and views of participants should be more closely examined and given more credence in the design and delivery of employment and training services.

Though programs may be focused on target populations and employment problems that are identified and confirmed by statistical data, in the final analysis, services are provided to people. Youth program participants, like Bobby, Carmeletta, Jack, David, and Sandy, are human beings who actively interpret their own needs and create their own meanings rather than merely reacting to external stimuli in a predictable fashion. Our programmatic assumptions must incorporate young people's own conceptualizations of their world; they cannot be accurate or fully effective if they rely solely on abstract understandings.

> Any scientific understanding of human action, at whatever level of ordering or generality, must begin with and be built upon an understanding of the everyday life of the members performing those actions. To fail to see this and to act in accord with it is to commit what we might call the fallacy of abstractionism, that is, the fallacy of believing that you can know in a more abstract form what you do not know in a particular form.
>
> Douglas, J. (1970) Understanding Everyday Life

We're All Looking For Something

> I wouldn't mind telling you about my experience...my ideas about this program and everything. But what I think and how it's been for me is probably real different from some of the other people you might talk to. There's all different kinds of people in this program, you know. And no two people you could talk to would probably be quite the same. We're all lookin' for something, but it might be different things. Everybody's got their own story. Everybody's got their own ideas.
>
> Sandy Bonds

Like the broader population of YEDPA participants from which they were drawn, the 32 young people who participated in the Youth Perspectives Project did not constitute a homogeneous group. All of the case study participants wanted to work or to find out more about the world of work, but they entered YEDPA programs with different backgrounds, characteristics, and needs. Their racial and ethnic characteristics were varied. Over half of the case study participants were white; ten were black; two were Indo-Chinese; one was Hispanic; and one was a Native American. They lived in different parts of the country, and they were raised in different kinds of households. Though most came from low income families, their personal income and employment needs varied. Some of them still lived at home and were supported by their parents or other family members. Others had been on their own for years; they were teenage parents, who depended on welfare, or independent young people, who managed to support themselves with sporadic employment, other activities, or help from friends. The case study participants came to YEDPA programs looking for different things. Some only wanted part-time jobs that would give them spending money while they finished high school. Others wanted full-time jobs that would provide enough money to live on. While many of the case study participants just wanted jobs, others were also looking for experience, vocational training, and educational credentials that would provide a link to a viable career future.

Sandy Bonds was right; no two participants are quite alike. And statistical breakdowns of YEDPA enrollee characteristics do not really tell us much about the full range and extent of differences among the young people who participated in YEDPA programs. Beyond demographic and circumstantial characteristics--that we can classify--lie the infinite and more subtle variations in individual experiences, personalities, values, aspirations, and potentials--that elude our attempts to categorize. But if the differences between individual participants are vast, so are the similarities. Most of the young people in the case study group have the shared experience of growing up American in the 1960's and 1970's. They are all seeking ways to establish adult lives in American society of the 1980's and beyond. In their efforts to find jobs and establish careers, they must deal with many of the same institutions and realities. Despite their differences, they face similar problems and they want many of the same things from life.

The key to using, in a broader context, the case study material presented in this volume lies in an appreciation of the similarities and differences of the case study participants. This chapter describes the case study group and compares it to the broader youth target population in regard to age, school status, income/employment needs, and living environments. It also provides a brief individual description of each of the 32 participants.

Age and Maturity

While the population eligible for YEDPA programs encompassed a ten year age span of youth from 14 to 24, the ages of participants in the case study group were more tightly clustered. The Youth Perspectives Project was focused on young people who were soon approaching or had recently approached an age for full labor force participation. In this respect, the case study group was good reflection of the actual participant mix. Though eligibility criteria for the YETP program allowed the enrollment of those both younger and older, nationally, the large majority of participants in YEDPA programs were between 16 and 19 years old. The youngest participant in the case study group was 16. The oldest case study participants were 19. Most were 17 or 18 years old when the Youth Perspectives interviews began.

Though the age range of the case study group covered less than a four year span, there were vast differences in the levels of maturation, degrees of personal responsibility, and range of life experiences evidenced by individual case study participants. In general, one expects a young adult of 19 to be more "grown up" than a 16 year old adolescent, but differences in individual development were noticeable even among those of the same chronological age.

Clearly, some young people grow up faster than others. The range of differences in the myriad of human capabilities and their rates of development is immense. Gesell Institute researchers report that differences in individual development, while impressive in their scope, tend to be subtle and elusive in infancy. But by the time of adolescence, these differences are much more readily apparent. These researchers believe that while chronological age is useful for marking individual development, the yearly unit has been overvalued as a criterion of growth and a basis for comparison between individuals. Change during adolescence is greater than at any other time of life except early childhood. Physical, psychosocial, and cognitive development is rapid, and it may also be uneven. At age 17 or 18, some young people are very much "older" than others. And for individuals, at age 17 or 18, some aspects of development may be much more advanced than others.

Within the case study group, differences in maturity and individual development were often most striking and poignant among young women of the same chronological age with vastly different life experiences, as illustrated by the following two cases:

Tina Middleton is 18 years old. She lives with her mother, grandmother, and two sisters in a small town in Kitsap County, Washington. In many ways, Tina fits the popular image of a teenage girl. She's a high school senior, has many friends, and participates in extra-curricular activities that range from the pep squad to the Future Farmers of America. She has a steady boyfriend. Tina says she consults her mother, her grandmother, and her boyfriend before making important decisions. She plans to live at home after she graduates for at least a year or so, until she and her boyfriend are "ready to live together". Tina says about herself:

> Sometimes I almost break into a rash when I have to talk to strangers. It's hard for me to go out into the world and do adult-type things. Working's helped some, but I'm still pretty shy. My mom's real outgoing and super-independent. I kinda tend to be a little more dependent. One of my teachers said I was babyish. I wish I could be more independent like my mom, but I don't want to be all that way. I wouldn't want to be alone like she is. That's too hard. I'm not ready to be on my own.

Genetta Burke is 18--the same age as Tina, but her circumstances have given her a vastly different perspective. Genetta is a welfare mother. She lives in Boston with her two children. Though they share an apartment with her grandmother, Genetta is clearly the one in charge. She's been on her own since age 16, six months after her son was born. Genetta works on a YCCIP weatherization crew. She feels she is much more grown-up than the young men with whom she works each day:

> If I could change anything around here, I'd get some older people workin' here. I'd rather work with older guys. You know, the guys here, they're all like 19 or 20, and they play like kids. I can't stand bein' around people who just play all the time. They be thinkin' that I think I'm better than them because I don't like to joke or play around a lot. But I'm too old for that stuff. I think it would be better with older people, more mature people. Men are just babies until they're 30.

Education and School Status

In our technological and credential oriented society, each year, there are fewer employment opportunities for young people who drop out of high school before graduation. During the last decade, there has been a great deal of public concern about the "drop out problem". Nationwide television and radio campaigns have been used to dramatize the disadvantages felt by young people who lack a high school diploma and the education it represents. Most of the nation's teenage population completes high school, and an increasing number of young people go on to college or post-secondary training.

In 1978, over 90 percent of 16 to 17 year old males were enrolled in school, and over 88 percent of females in the same age group attended school. About 80 percent of these young people remained in high school until graduation. After high school graduation, school enrollment falls considerably. Only about 50 percent of all 18 and 19 year olds in 1978 were enrolled in school. While the majority of young people from all income and racial groups do complete high school, rates of high school noncompletion are substantially greater among economically disadvantaged and non-white youth populations.

High school dropouts comprise a significant segment of the youth program target population. A 1978 survey of 6,415 youth eligible for the Youth Incentive Entitlement Program in eight sites showed that about one-third of the economically disadvantaged 16 to 19 year old sample were dropouts in the 1977-78 school year. The YIEPP program was designed to reduce high school noncompletion by providing employment incentives and support services for youth who remained in school until graduation or could be persuaded to return to school. YCCIP projects were supposed to give preference in enrollment to out of school youth experiencing difficulty finding jobs, and the YETP program was designed to serve low income dropouts as well as high school students. Under all three programs, alternative education services, like GED instruction, were made available to dropouts who were not able or did not choose to return to high school on a regular basis.

Though high school dropouts were a major target group for YEDPA programs, they did not account for the largest proportion of program enrollments. The majority of participants were high school students at the time they enrolled in YEDPA programs. Even YIEPP programs, which served non-high school graduates exclusively, enrolled much higher percentages of students than of dropouts returning to school. In February 1978, 67 percent of YETP and 50 percent of YCCIP enrollees were high school students. Only 20 percent of the total YETP enrollment and 40 percent of the much smaller YCCIP enrollment was made up of high school dropouts. Between 10 and 13 percent of the participants in YETP and YCCIP programs were high school graduates.

The Youth Perspectives Project was concerned with issues of high school completion and school experiences from both the student and the dropout perspective. The case study group was comprised of participants who had not yet graduated from high school. When the interviews began, thirteen of the case study participants were enrolled in regular public high schools. Of this group, all but one were in the first half of their senior year. (One high school participant was a junior.) Three case study participants were attending alternative or experimental high schools when they enrolled in YEDPA programs. Sixteen of the 32 participants were out of school at the time of program enrollment.

A tabulation of participant school status at the time of program enrollment does not provide a complete picture of the educational experience of case study participants. Only 12 of the 32 participants had been continuous school attenders. Each of the other 20 had dropped out of school at least once before enrolling in YEDPA programs. Among both the continuous attenders and the dropouts, there was considerable diversity in regard to academic abilities, basic skill levels, and grade point averages. The case study group included high school dropouts with reasonable good academic skills as well as dropouts with serious skill deficiencies. It also included highly motivated high school students bound for college as well as students who moved toward high school graduation with marked academic deficiencies. A brief description of the school status and educational background of four participants illustrates the range of differences within the case study group.

Mark Westgate was 17 and a senior at Camwell High School when he became a case study participant. Mark lives in Camwell, Michigan with his mother and a younger brother and sister. His parents have been divorced for several years, and his mother receives AFDC support. He rarely sees his father, an industrial hygenist who has moved out of the Kalamazoo area. But as his mother's oldest child and the firstborn grandson on both sides of his family, Mark has been the object of a good deal of family attention and pride. Mark's academic ability and musical talent have earned him recognition in the high school and in the community. During his junior and senior years in high school, Mark filled lead roles in a number of productions at the local civic theatre, he maintained an "A" average in his school work, and he worked part-time, under YETP, as an aide in the high school band room. From an early age, Mark has planned to graduate from college; and he expects to finance his education with scholarships.

Mark Gurney lives on a farm in Rexburg, Michigan. Since his parents divorced five years ago, he's lived with his father and two older brothers. Mark is a senior at Rexburg High School. A continuous school attender, he says that he's never seriously considered dropping out before graduation although he finds school work very difficult. At 19½ years old, Mark is two full grades behind standard. Mark gets "C's" and "D's" in most of his classes. He's missed a lot of school during the past few years because of illnesses, like pneumonia and bronchitis, and he hasn't been able to make up all the work. Though Mark is working hard to complete high school, he's worried about what will happen to him after graduation:

> From what I've heard, mostly, you have to go to college and stuff to get a good job. But that's not always true. My dad only went to the sixth grade. He hasn't done so bad or anything, but he can't send me to college or anything like that, you know. I'll be on my own when I graduate. So I hope I can find a good job even if I can't go to college.

Harold Thomas had his eighteenth birthday several months after the case study interviews began. He was living in a public housing project in Boston with his older sister and two younger sisters. Before his mother and father died, Harold's family lived in a small town in Virginia. Among his family and friends in Virginia, Harold was considered a talented young man. He plays several musical instruments and he is adept at sketching. He also did well academically. Harold says: "I liked school until I moved to Boston. I was on the honor roll for about eight years straight. Then I moved up here and everything just dropped. I started going to South Boston

High, and I found out there was a whole lot of racism up here." After a year of poor grades, sporadic attendance, and frequent fights, Harold dropped out of South Boston High. He enlisted in the Army Reserves and did well in both combat training and mechanic school. When he returned to Boston, Harold worked several months as a security guard before enrolling in a YCCIP weatherization project.

Bobby Jones was 18 when the case study interviews began. He had been a participant in a Boston YIEPP project for less than two weeks. Bobby says that he decided not to return to high school during the summer after his freshman year at West Roxbury. He was 16½ years old, and he had been told that he would have to repeat the ninth grade the following year. "I felt like I wasn't doin' nothin' at the school anyway," Bobby says. "Nobody cared if I made it or not." Bobby spent the next year and a half "stayin' out on the street". He lived with his older sister in a public housing project, but Bobby says, "I mostly went my own way...just comin' home to sleep and all." When he started YIEPP classes, Bobby lacked the basic skills and discipline to perform high school level work. His teacher, Mr. Morelock, said: "Bobby reads at the level of a fifth or sixth grade student, and he's way behind in Math too. He's smart enough; he can learn, but it's been a long time since he applied himself to anything."

Income and Employment Needs

YEDPA programs were targeted on young people whose income and employment needs were greatest. The majority of YEDPA participants were economically disadvantaged youth, who were unemployed, underemployed, or out of the labor force at the time of enrollment. All of the youth served by the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects were from households with below poverty level income. YETP income eligibility criteria were a bit more flexible than those of YIEPP, but the large majority of YETP participants came from households with income below 85 percent of the lower living standard set by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Though YCCIP was not an income tested program, nationally, three-fifths of YCCIP participants were economically disadvantaged. More than a fifth of all YCCIP enrollees were from families on AFDC.

The majority of the 32 participants in the Youth Perspectives case study group were classified as economically disadvantaged at the time of YEDPA program enrollment, but there were considerable differences in the family income and employment backgrounds of case study participants. Several participants, 18 or older, came from middle or upper-middle income families, but they qualified as disadvantaged because they were unemployed and no longer family dependents. Several other participants lived in households where low income was the recent result of divorce, parental job loss, or other family crises, and was not a chronic condition. Even among participants from historically low income families, there were substantial differences in individual income and employment needs.

Within the case study group, differences in individual circumstances played a stronger role than family economic status in determining participant income and employment needs. While about half of the 32 case study participants received some financial support from their parents or other family members, the others were on their own and depended on welfare or personal earnings for support. Unemployed case study participants with no alternative sources of support obviously had the most critical income needs. Most were seeking full-time work to support themselves. Participants who lived at home and were full-time students were under varying levels of pressure to earn money through part-time work.

Among both the participants whose personal income needs were critical and those whose needs were less intense, there were considerable variations in levels of employment experience and job readiness at the time of YEDPA program enrollment. Several participants had never worked before and many knew very little about the world of work. Others had been working for a number of years. The following descriptions of four case study participants illustrate the range of differences in family economic status, individual income need, and employment readiness within the case study group.

Vivian Lincoln, at age 16, was the youngest case study participant. When the interviews began, she was a junior at Marcus Garvey High School in Portland. Vivian lives with her mother, father and older sister. During most of Vivian's life, both of her parents were employed. But when Mrs. Lincoln injured her back in a car accident two years ago, she had to leave her job as a dental assistant; and she has been unable to work ever since. Mr. Lincoln's income, as an orthopedic supply salesman, varies from year to year. Mary, Vivian's sister, has worked since she graduated from high school in 1977. Vivian had never held any kind of job before she applied to the YETP program. Although medical bills and the loss of income resulting from her mother's accident strained the Lincoln family's lifestyle, Vivian says that she felt no particular pressure to find part-time work:

> As far as my parents are concerned, my education comes first. They think it's neat that I'm working cuz it's a real learning experience for me. But the most important thing is that I get my school work done and graduate. They left it up to me whether to take the job or not.

Lori Wozisky is 18 years old. She lives with her parents, sister and brother in Camwell, Michigan. When the Youth Perspectives Project began, Lori was a senior at Camwell High School. Neither of Lori's parents have worked outside the home since she was a small girl. Lori got her first job at age 14, when she was hired under the summer CETA program to do clerical work at the high school. Since then she has rarely been without a job. Before she enrolled [illegible] the YETP program, most of Lori's part-time jobs were in small restaurants. Lori feels that she has been under a lot of pressure to work:

> Well, my dad doesn't work. He got hurt on the job. He gets social security and he's home all the time. My mom doesn't work either. She gets disability. She had an arm that was crushed in the paint factory where she was working when a conveyor broke. It just crushed her arm. She hasn't been able to use it since 1963. It seems like my parents have always been on me to work--even when I was too young to really find a job. My mom really gets on my back if I'm not working. I pay for my own clothes and most of my own things.

Todd Clinton was 18 years old when he enrolled in Portland's YETP program. He was living with a friend and had been supporting himself with his own earnings since he dropped out of the twelfth grade over a year and a half earlier. Todd's first exposure to the working world was his experience in a family operated business. His father owns a small fiberglass construction company in Portland. While Todd was growing up, his mother worked at home, taking care of the house and three children, and Mr. Clinton worked to establish the business. The company eventually became quite successful. Todd is an older son. He started working on construction projects with his father when he was only 13 years old. Mr. Clinton demanded a lot from Todd on the job. He wanted his son to be well-trained so that some day he could take over the business. But Todd had other ideas; he wanted to be a hair stylist. Todd quit his job with his father to enroll in cosmetology school. When his father refused to lend him money for tuition and he couldn't find a part-time job, Todd applied to the CETA youth program in Southeast Portland for support while he attended school. During our first interview, Todd offered the following comments about his career choice:

> Ever since I left high school, I've wanted to do something creative--something in design. I always hated the construction business, but I couldn't seem to get out of it. When I first decided to go to cosmetology school, uh, it was very tough. See I had to quit my dad when he needed me most. He wouldn't pay for me to go to school. He said he didn't even want me in the house. I guess the macho son image was blown when I picked hair design.
>
> My dad tried to run my life--just like his. He's a hard worker, but he's obsessed by money. His whole life was just surrounded by...on more or less giving me a hard time. It's like kidding, but it doesn't seem like kidding. He expected so much out of me when I worked with him. He rode me a lot. I just couldn't take all the riding. All the time he was getting mad, beating me down. Working with my dad, I was sinking. It was either him or...I mean, I had to get out of there--get some training, get started on something that I wanted to do. I couldn't do it on my own, so that's why I came to CETA.

Carmeletta DeVries was a 17 year old single parent when the case study research began. She had been living with her sister in Kalamazoo since her son was born nine months earlier. Her sister, who is also a single parent, was a welfare recipient. They were raised by their mother in a single parent family. Carmeletta applied to the welfare office for aid when her son was born, but she soon found that her small AFDC allotment was not enough to cover living expenses. Carmeletta was looking for a full-time job when she applied to the YETP program. Her only previous employment experience was 10 weeks of summertime work in the SPEDY program. Carmeletta wanted to work, but she had little idea what she could do or what kind of work was available:

> I just wanted a job, you know, to earn some money and all. Cuz I wasn't doing too good on welfare. Didn't matter what kind of job really. I mean I was willing to do just about anything. I finally came to CETA cuz I didn't have too much luck anywhere else. Someone told my boyfriend that you could get a job here. If you were young and didn't have too much experience and stuff, they would find you a job and you could learn.

Residential Setting

Residential location plays an important role in the incidence of youth employment problems. While unemployment among teenagers and young adults is most heavily concentrated in urban and predominantly non-white neighborhoods, youth unemployment is also a problem in rural areas and largely white suburbs. In 1978, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that a 16 to 19 year old living in an average socio-economic level suburb had a 1 in 6 chance of being unemployed. A teenager living in a suburban or rural poverty area had a 1 in 4 chance of being unemployed while a young person living in the poverty area of a central city had an unemployment chance of 1 in 3. At the same time, two out of every five non-white teenagers seeking work in the poverty areas of central cities were unemployed.

The largest portion of the nation's 16 to 24 year old population resides in suburban settings. Over 42 percent of unemployed white youth live in the suburbs; about 32 percent live in non-metropolitan areas; and only about 26 percent live in urban settings. Among non-white youth, however, the patterns are quite different. Over 60 percent of unemployed blacks 16 to 24 live in urban areas; about 21 percent live in rural areas; and only about 18 percent reside in the suburbs. YIEPP grants were awarded to prime sponsors in large cities, where youth unemployment was high, and these programs enrolled heavy percentages of non-white participants. YETP and YCCIP grants were available to all prime sponsors, and the mix of participant characteristics for these programs reflected those of a broader population of unemployed youth.

Participants for the Youth Perspectives Project were drawn from four geographic areas, and a diversity of residential settings was represented within the case study group. Nearly three-fifths, or 19, of the 32 case study participants came from urban neighborhoods in Boston or Portland. The other participants, from Kalamazoo or Kitsap County, lived in suburbs (4), smaller cities (3), or rural environments (6).

The impact of residential setting on the lives of young people extends well beyond employment and labor market participation effects, as we shall see in Chapter III. Differences in actual living conditions among those in the case study group were dramatic. Variables like the amount of physical space, opportunities for privacy, aesthetic qualities of home and neighborhood surroundings, degree of health and safety hazard, and likelihood of personal assault clearly affected the daily lives and well-being of case study participants. The most striking contrasts in living conditions were found between young people in inner city neighborhoods and those in rural settings, as shown in the following examples.

Adam Sledge lives in a public housing project in Boston. At 18, he is still at home with his mother, four sisters and two brothers. Two older brothers have moved away from home. The eight Sledges share a three bedroom apartment in Victoria Point. The Victoria Point housing project was built in the 1950's and now stands half deserted on a promontory cutoff from the rest of the community by the highway and the sea. A nearby shopping mall, built to accommodate project residents, was closed in the 1960's, reportedly due to vandalism and the decline in the project's population. With its relative isolation from major transportation routes and community services, Victoria Point attracts few new residents. The high-rise buildings in Victoria Point have been boarded up--condemned because it was impossible to keep the elevators in operation. The disaffection and frustration of the young people who live there are apparent in the broken windows and charred hallways of most of the project's buildings. This is what Adam says about life at Victoria Point:

> Around here everything's busted up. You know, it looks pretty bad. But I lived here a long time so I guess I'm used to it. The main thing is there's nothing much to do. Not too much for kids to get into, you know? Not too many people come in the project--especially not too many white people. Not because it's so bad or nothin', but mainly just because it's a project. I mean, why come here if you don't have to? But that's one thing about it--if anybody from the outside was to come in, then everybody sticks together. Sometimes people from in town come into here and cause trouble, and we get the blame. When stuff like that comes down, people here stick together. But otherwise, everybody's fighting each other. You know, quarreling and yellin' at each other, rippin' stuff off each other.

On the other side of the country, over 3,000 miles from Victoria Point, Lynn Hazelton lives on 15 wooded acres, five miles outside of Port Orchard, the Kitsap County Seat. She shares a three room cabin with her boyfriend. Situated in a grassy clearing surrounded by tall firs, the cabin is tiny but snug. A huge pile of split logs is stacked outside the door, and smoke curls up from the chimney. Lynn was 18 when the case study research began. She'd left her parents' home in Arizona two years before and had been living with her boyfriend in the cabin for just over a year. Her enthusiasm for her new environment was apparent:

> I really love it here. Like I can walk about 20 acres from where I live before I come to another house. It's a feeling like, "Here I am! My own little corner of the world." I've got my trees and animals. I like being around nature. And the people here are great. They're real friendly, but they know when to leave you alone. I wouldn't want to live in a city. I was raised out in the country, and I don't think I could live without animals around. All those people so close together and everything...I'd miss some things in the city.

Though the case study group is not a perfect microcosm of the YEDPA participant universe, it encompasses many of the characteristics, circumstances and employment problems found within the broader population of participants. In the preceding sections of this chapter, fifteen case study participants have been introduced by name. We have learned something about their individual histories and circumstances and about the range of differences and similarities within the case study group. The index which follows provides a more complete orientation to the full case study group. It lists each of the 32 participants by name and gives his or her age, race (or ethnic background), geographic location, school status, and program affiliation. The index listings also include a brief summary description of each participant at the time the Youth Perspectives interviews began. Some readers may want to digest more information on individual case study participants before we follow them into their homes, in Chapter II, and learn more about their family lives and aspirations. But the index is also intended to serve as a reference for the cast of case study characters, to which the reader can return for details that augment and provide background for the case study material and anecdotes in later chapters.

Index of Case Study Participants*

David Anderson: Age 18 • White • Kitsap County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP Program •

David is tall and well-groomed, with blue eyes and an unassuming, direct manner. He lives in a group home, in which he was placed by the juvenile court, at his mother's request, for uncontrollable behavior at home. His mother and step-father make monthly payments for David's support, but all group home members are encouraged to work part-time to earn their own spending money. When our interviews began, David had been working five months as an automotive maintenance aide at the high school bus garage. He began working there, full-time, as a summer program participant and continued working part-time in the fall under the YETP program.

Jean Ansel: Age 17 • White • Portland • 10th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Jean is a slender and strong looking young woman. She has straight brown hair and wears no make-up. Her skeptical and penetrating gaze is disconcerting at first, but she talks about her experiences in a non-defensive, straightforward way. Jean is a former heroin addict, and she has been on her own since she was age 15. When she applied to the YETP program, Jean had been "clean" for over a year, and she was receiving temporary income support from the Children's Services Division. When our interviews began, Jean had been working full-time for 9 months as a YETP aide in a school for handicapped children.

Sandy Bonds: Age 18 • White • Portland • 11th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Sandy is a petite young woman, with blond hair, blue eyes, and a fiercely independent personality. She wears heavy boots and baggy work clothes even when she's not involved in construction work at the home repair project. Sandy's parents divorced when she was young, and she has been on the move since she was 14 years old. She's lived in five different states, with her mother, her father, foster families, friends, or on her own. She dropped out of school several times before finally leaving the eleventh grade at age 16. Her juvenile offense record includes vagrancy, drug dealing, truancy, and disorderly conduct. Sandy had only been in Portland a few weeks when she applied to the YETP program. She and her girlfriend were living on the street and looking for work. When our interviews began, Sandy and her girlfriend had an apartment, and she had been working full-time for two months as a YETP construction trainee.

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*The characteristics data and descriptions in this index portray each case study participant at the time the Youth Perspectives Project interviews began, November/December, 1978.

Peggy Bromfield: Age 18 • White • Portland • 9th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Peggy is alert and outgoing. She has curly brown hair and is very pretty despite her slightly jagged teeth, about which she is noticeably self-conscious. There is still an air of adolescence about Peggy, and it is difficult at first to believe that she is the mother of two children. She was raised in a middle income, two parent family and married at age 15, shortly after becoming pregnant for the first time. She was pregnant with her second child when she and her husband divorced the following year. When our interviews began, Peggy was living alone with her children and supporting her family with a combination of AFDC payments and YETP earnings. She had been enrolled full-time in a medical careers exploration project for about two months.

Genetta Burke: Age 18 • Black • Boston • 11th Grade Dropout • YCCIP •

Genetta has the appearance and self-confidence of an attractive woman in her prime. She dresses stylishly and converses easily, even with strangers. Genetta has two children. She has received AFDC payments since her first child was born when she was 15 years old. Genetta has worked for short periods at several different jobs, but she was unemployed when she applied for a YCCIP weatherization project position. She had been working full-time at the project for seven weeks when our interviews began.

Heidi Clark: Age 18 • White • Portland • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Heidi is a tiny young woman with sharp features and a high, clear voice. She has lived with her brother, his wife, and daughter since her parents divorced, when she was 16. Before coming to Portland, Heidi lived in Southern California. She likes Portland and prefers living with her brother's family to life with either of her parents, but she misses her friends and says she doesn't like her new school as well as the old one in California. Heidi's brother is a graduate student, who teaches part-time. Her father, who is a pharmacist, pays for some of Heidi's support. She is a good student but has never planned to go on to college after graduation. Heidi secured a part-time YETP job at the U.S. Forest Service during the spring of her junior year.

Luanne Clawson: Age 17 • Black • Boston • 11th Grade Dropout, transfer to GED instruction component • YIEPP •

Luanne is a soft spoken young woman with clear skin and large eyes. She has a malformed palate, which causes her to speak with a slight lisp. Luanne has lived with her mother since her parents separated when she was 7 years old. Mrs. Clawson supports herself, Luanne, and a younger daughter on AFDC payments. Luanne dropped out of high school to enroll in a YIEPP program. She had been taking business courses and was interested in secretarial work. But she says she had a hard time learning in high school and decided that she could do better in the smaller GED classes at a YIEPP project that was operating out of a community center near her home. When our interviews began, Luanne had been a YIEPP participant for several weeks. She was attending classes in the morning and working at the center in the afternoon as a clerical aide.

Todd Clinton: Age 19 • White • Portland • 12th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Todd is an engaging person. Though he was still in cosmetology school and a YETP participant when our interviews began, his cordial manner and new wave haircut and clothes conveyed the image of a professional hair stylist. Todd was only 17 when he left home to join the National Guard. He had been having violent arguments with his father and finally decided that he needed to get away--though it meant leaving high school only three months short of graduation. After he returned from his training with the National Guard, Todd began working for his father full-time. Though their fights resumed, they worked together for over a year before Todd quit to enroll in the Belle Vista Hair Design Academy. When I met Todd, he had been attending school there, as a YETP participant, for 10 months.

Carmeletta DeVries: Age 17 • Black • Kalamazoo County • 11th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Carmeletta's hair is braided in elaborate corn rows. She speaks very slowly in a deep, melodious voice. Though she has an air of natural reserve, Carmeletta can also be very candid and direct. When she left high school, at age 16, she was six months pregnant. Though she never liked school much, Carmeletta says she is sorry now that she didn't graduate. After her baby was born, Carmeletta wanted to work, and her sister agreed to babysit for her. But Carmeletta was not able to find an unsubsidized job. When our interviews began, Carmeletta's son was 9 months old and she had been working full-time for less than a month as a YETP food service aide at a state operated hospital. She was also receiving a small AFDC allotment.

Douglas Giscard: Age 18 • Native American • Portland • 10th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Douglas is a particularly articulate young man. He is small and well built, with light brown skin and long, jet black hair. Douglas is not a full-blooded Native American. His mother is from a Northwest American Indian tribe, and his father is a French Canadian. The Giscards are a middle income family. As devout Catholics, Mr. and Mrs. Giscard set very strict standards for their children. But Douglas, their oldest son, had ideas of his own that conflicted with his parents' views. By mutual agreement, Douglas left his parents' home at age 15. Though he received some support from them, he has essentially been on his own since then. He was referred to the

YETP program by his juvenile probation officer, following his arrest for burglary. When our interviews began, Douglas had been working full-time, for 1 month, as a staff support aide at a community based youth service agency.

Carrie Green: Age 18 • White • Kalamazoo County • 10th Grade Dropout • YCCIP •

Carrie has long blond hair and a lanky, girlish figure. Her face is pretty but devoid of much expression. She is slow to answer and sometimes has difficulty expressing ideas. Though she appears at first to be listless, she has definite opinions and, when challenged, will defend her point of view. Since her parents divorced when she was 10, Carrie's family has consisted of her father and two older sisters. Mr. Green is a factory line manager. Carrie's sisters both graduated from high school. They live at home and are employed as retail clerks. Carrie says she is very different from her sisters and does not get along well with either of them. Carrie is not a good student. She dropped out of school at age 16 in order to start working, earn money, and move out on her own. Since then, Carrie has had a number of different low-paying jobs. She has lived with friends and moved in and out of her father's house several times, as her employment status fluctuated. When our interviews began, Carrie was living at home and she had been working full-time for four months as a clerical aide on a university based YCCIP project.

Mark Gurney: Age 19 • Kalamazoo County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Mark is a friendly and cooperative person. Chronic bouts of bronchitis and other illnesses have left him with a permanent pallor, and his teeth are discolored by a medication that he took for childhood ailments. His rambling and somewhat disconnected way of speaking, and his tendency to slur words, make it difficult to understand Mark at first. Mark has had to repeat two grades in school, and he will be 20 years old when he graduates in June, 1979. Since his parents divorced when he was 14, Mark has lived with his father and two brothers on a farm in the small community of Rexburg, Michigan. His father is disabled and receives social security. Mark got his first SPEDY job the summer after the ninth grade. He became a YETP participant during the spring of his junior year in high school. When our interviews began, Mark was working as a day care aide for the head start program.

Lynn Hazelton: Age 18 • White • Kitsap County • 12th Grade, Re-enrolled Former Dropout • YETP•

Lynn is a heavy set young woman with short brown hair and pleasant features. Though not shy, Lynn is quiet and slow to speak. When we first met, Lynn was still in a state of shock and depression over the death of her 18 month old son several months earlier. Lynn was pregnant with her son when she dropped out of school and left her parents' home to come to Washington with her boyfriend. When her boyfriend had trouble finding work, Lynn applied for welfare to cover the expenses of childbirth. She received AFDC support until her son was drowned in a neighbor's swimming pool during a summertime visit with her parents in Arizona. Following her son's death, her boyfriend, who was then working construction, insisted that Lynn return to school. Though Lynn had little interest at that time, she says she enrolled in a local public high school to please her boyfriend. One month after she returned to school, Lynn applied to the YETP program. She had been working less than three weeks as a part-time health care aide when our interviews began.

Lui Heuyen: Age 17 • Vietnamese • Portland • 12th Grade • YETP •

Lui is a bright and lively young woman. Her English, though far from perfect, is fluent, and she is outgoing and communicative. When Lui immigrated to the U.S. with her family in 1975, she spoke no English. Under the sponsorship of a church organization, the Hueyens settled first in a small town on the Oregon coast, where Lui started high school and rapidly developed her speaking and writing skills. After two years, Mr. Hueyen, who is a tailor, decided to move his family to the larger city of Portland, where there would be a better market for his services. Lui's father and three older brothers have worked steadily since they came to Oregon--starting out in low-paying, unskilled jobs and moving gradually to better positions. Lui was a SPEDY participant before she moved to Portland. Following her family's move, Lui found an after school job in a ceramics factory. When our interviews began, Lui had left the factory and had been working part-time for two weeks as a YETP trainee at a computer center of the U.S. Forest Service.

Jessica Jackson: Age 17 • Black • Kitsap County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Jessica is an attractive young woman with light brown skin, wide grey eyes, and a voluable, solicitous nature. Though she has had her share of adolescent troubles, and was once on juvenile court probation as a runaway, Jessica feels that most of the difficulties of growing up are now behind her. She makes it very clear that she sees herself as a mature young woman rather than as a "troublesome teenager". Jessica's parents separated before she was born, and she has never met her father. Though she lives with her mother, her grandmother has been the central figure in her life. Jessica has been a SPEDY participant for two summers and has held a number of different part-time jobs on her own. She wants to go to community college after graduation. When our interviews began, Jessica had been working for one month as a part-time YETP hospital health aide.

Bobby Jones: Age 18 • Black • Boston • 9th Grade Dropout • YIEPP •

Bobby is tall, black, and lean. He walks with athletic grace and a bit of a swagger. Bobby likes to talk, and he's interesting and easy to listen to. Bobby was one of four children, raised in a single-parent household. His mother died when he was 14, and since then Bobby has lived with his older sister and two younger sisters in a public housing project. After his mother's death, Bobby did poorly in school. He dropped out at age 16, after failing to pass his ninth grade classes. He spent the next two years out of school and out of work. He worked one summer as a SPEDY kitchen aide in the cafeteria of the community center, where he later became a YIEPP participant. Bobby has a juvenile offense record, and he was the only case study participant to be arrested during the Youth Perspectives Project research period. When our interviews began, Bobby had been enrolled in the YIEPP program for two weeks. He was attending GED instruction in the morning and working afternoons as a sports reporter for the community center newspaper.

Linda Larsen: Age 17 • White • Kalamazoo County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Linda is an attractive and meticulously well-groomed young woman, with a low, throaty voice. After a very troubled early adolescence, Linda has thrived during the past two years with her foster family in the small community of Hillcrest, Michigan. Linda says she didn't get along at all with her mother, whom she describes as being eccentric and dogmatic. Linda was a neglected and disorderly child, who made her first juvenile court appearance at age 13. She moved in and out of several different foster homes before coming to live with her current foster parents, who are clearly extremely fond of her. Linda is also highly thought of by the school administrators and teachers who have watched her growth since she came to Hillcrest High School. She is a "B" student and would like to go to college someday, but she knows that she will need to earn her own way after graduation. Linda enrolled in the YETP program in the spring of her junior year. She worked as a janitorial aide for several months before securing a part-time job as a clerical aide in the high school office.

Sven Latoka: Age 19 • White • Boston • 10th Grade Dropout • YCCIP •

Sven is a strong, rawboned young man with a military haircut and the deferential manners of a marine recruit. He has been a member of the Marine Reserves for two years. Sven lives with his parents, brother, and sister in Jamaica Plain, a white, working class neighborhood of Boston. Sven has worked steadily since he left high school at age 16--first as a carpenters assistant with his father, and later in a series of short term jobs on his own. Sven wants to be a carpenter, and learned the basic techniques and skills from his father. He applied to a YCCIP renovation and construction project because he was unable to get carpentry work after his father left the business. Sven was tired of low paying, dead-end jobs and wanted to get training and references that would improve his employment prospects. He had just started working on the YCCIP project when our interviews began.

Vivian Lincoln: Age 16 • Black • Portland • 11th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

At 16, Vivian is still shy with adults that she doesn't know well. She pats down her shoulder length processed hair frequently and unconsciously, and our first interview was punctuated by giggles. Vivian lives in a pleasant, well kept household, with her parents and older sister. She likes school and is an average student. Before she applied to the YETP program, Vivian had never had a job of any kind. She began working part-time at the hospital as a YETP nurses aide several months before our interviews began.

Yvette McDermott: Age 18 • Black • Portland • 10th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Yvette is a very pretty teenagerwith the composure of an older woman. She is the mother of a two year old son and is the only case study participant who was married when the Youth Perspective interviews began. Soon after her son was born, Yvette married his father, who had been her boyfriend since she was 14. Yvette says that family life is very important to her. Her early home life, with a neglectful mother, was chaotic, and Yvette would like her children to grow up in a better environment. She would like to have two more children when her husband completes his training and finds a stable job as an electrician. Yvette has been able to find part-time work on her own as cashier and a stock clerk. When she enrolled in YETP, she was looking for vocational training that would lead to better employment opportunities. She had been enrolled for three weeks in a key punch operator training program at a community based school when our interviews began.

Tina Middleton: Age 18 • White • Kitsap County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Tina is a tall girl with a full figure and a womanly face. Although she looks mature, at 18, her manner is kittenish and adolescent. She speaks in a rapid, breathless chatter and was rarely silent during our time together. Since her father died when Tina was 10, her family has consisted of her mother, grandmother, and two younger sisters. Mrs. Middleton receives AFDC and is training, under the WIN program, to become a legal secretary. Though the Middletons are a close-knit family, Tina says she doesn't spend much time at home. She is involved in many school activities, has an active social life, and helps her boyfriend breed and show livestock for 4-H events. Tina and her boyfriend have "gone steady" for two years. They want to live together before they marry. Tina has worked two summers as a SPEDY clerical aide. She enrolled in the YETP program two months before our interviews began and was placed in a part-time job at a state operated fish hatchery.

Patty Monson: Age 18 • White • Kitsap County • 11th Grade Dropout, Re-enrolled in Alternative High School • YETP •

Patty is a welfare mother with the cheerful demeanor and well-scrubbed look of a high school cheerleader. Patty is the only daughter of a large Mormon family. The Monsons moved to Kitsap County from a small town in Utah when Patty was starting tenth grade. Mr. Monson is a dry-wall construction contractor, and several of his five sons work with him. None of Patty's older brothers has completed high school. Patty left school when she became pregnant. She then moved with her family to the other side of the county and lived at home until her son was four months old. She applied for AFDC and got an aprtment of her own, located within walking distance of her parents' home. Patty enrolled in a homestudy program at an alternative high school. She heard about the YETP program from one of her teachers. Patty had been working as a part-time clerical aide in an elementary school for one month when our interviews began. Her son, Jared, was 10 months old.

Richard Nielson: Age 18 • White • Portland • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

With his heavy body, slumped shoulders, and near-sighted squint, Richard, at first, appears to be an old man. In our first conversation, Richard paused so long before responding that I thought perhaps he was hard of hearing. But I later discovered that he was merely thinking things over before he spoke. Richard is slow and deliberate, but he is not uncommunicative or unintelligent. His father died when he was 7, and since then Richard has lived alone with his mother, a devout and strict Seventh Day Adventist. The Nielsons are welfare recipients. Richard worked one summer as a SPEDY participant before he enrolled in the YETP program during his junior year in high school. When our interviews began, Richard had been working for six months as a part-time janitorial aide in a community based agency.

Felisa Santana: Age 17 • Hispanic • Boston • 11th Grade Dropout, Re-enrolled in Alternative High School • YETP •

With her streaked hair, carefully applied make-up, and dressy clothes, Felisa looks like a young working woman rather than a high school student. Felisa lives with her mother, father, and five younger brothers and sisters. Both Mr. and Mrs. Santana are unemployed, and the family is supported by welfare. Although she was born in Puerto Rico, Felisa has spent most of her life in Boston. From kindergarten until eighth grade, she attended public school in Boston. In 1975, the Santanas decided to return to Puerto Rico. Felisa liked living in Puerto Rico, but after two years there, her parents decided their children would have better schooling and more opportunity in Massachusetts. The Santanas moved back to Boston in the middle of the 1977-78 school year, when desegregation was in full swing. When Felisa discovered that she would be bused to South Boston High, she refused to return to school. After several months at home, Felisa enrolled in a

GED instruction program at a community based, bi-lingual school, which receives CETA funding support. When our interviews began, Felisa had been attending classes and working part-time for eight months as a YETP aide at a neighborhood health clinic near the school.

Adam Sledge: Age 18 • Black • Boston • 11th Grade Dropout • YCCIP •

Adam is a dark, handsome young man. Though he is eager to appear adult and his posture is knowing, there is an air of youthful innocence about him. Adam lives with his mother and six brothers and sisters in the Victoria Point Housing Project. The Sledges receive AFDC support. Adam was a good student, who particularly excelled in Math. Adam says he always liked school, but he dropped out in his junior year. His girlfriend was pregnant, and Adam felt, as a prospective father, he should be "out in the world, working and making money instead of sitting in school like a child". Adam's girlfriend, Cindy, also left school and lives at home with her mother. Adam was able to find part-time work as night security aide at Victoria Point--a job he kept after enrolling as a daytime YCCIP participant. Adam had only been working one week on a YCCIP weatherization project when our interviews began.

Elvira Taylor: Age 17 • Black • Portland • 10th Grade Transfer to Alternative Education Program • YETP •

Elvira is not an easy person to get to know. Sometimes she is soft and shy and appears very vulnerable; other times she is sharp, brusque, and almost impenetrable. Elvira lives with her mother and younger brother in Northeast Portland. Her parents separated when she was young, and her mother supports the household with AFDC payments. Elvira's two older sisters, who live away from home, are also single parents and AFDC recipients. Elvira left the public high school she was attending because she wasn't getting along with some of her classmates and she was tired of being "hassled". When our interviews began, Elvira had been a YETP participant for about six months. She was a teachers aide for younger children at the Black, community based school, to which she had transferred, and she also worked part-time on a black history project.

Harold Thomas: Age 17 • Black • Boston • 11th Grade Dropout • YCCIP •

Harold is a tall, muscular young man with a gentle manner and a faraway look in his eyes. He is articulate and expressive. After two years in Boston, Harold still speaks with a Virginia drawl. Harold and his younger sisters left their home town in Virginia to live with an oder sister in Boston, following the death of their parents in an automobile accident. Harold says he was not prepared for the kind of living conditions he found in the public housing projects of Boston or the racial hostility he encountered at South Boston High. After dropping out of school in his junior year, Harold enlisted in the Army Reserves. When he returned from Army training, Harold was able to find work. But he wanted to pass his GED examinations so he could be accepted into the regular Army. Harold enrolled in a YCCIP weatherization project in order to earn money while studying for a GED. When our interviews began, Harold had been working full-time on the project for two weeks.

Jack Thrush: Age 17 • White • Kalamazoo County • 11th Grade Dropout • YETP •

Jack is a slightly built, quick moving young man, with blond shoulder length hair and a vigilant expression. Jack was watchful and wary during our first meeting, and I was surprised when he said he wanted to participate in the interviews. Though Jack became more open as we got to know each other, his behavior was always slightly erratic. He would not show up for interviews at the scheduled times, but would usually manage to put in an appearance at the last possible moment. Jack's father died when he was young, and his mother remarried several years ago. Jack left school unofficially several times before dropping out for good in his junior year. After leaving school, he found work and moved out of his mother's house. When he applied to the YETP program, he was unemployed and living with his stepfather and mother. He had been working full-time as a YETP janitorial aide for six months when our interviews began.

Joy Tippets: Age 18 • White • Kalamazoo County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Joy is short and plump, with a warm smile and curly brown hair. She has a reassuring, matter-of-fact personality, and, despite a recent history of health problems, she maintains a steady, optomistic outlook. Joy lives with both her parents and a younger brother in the small farming community of Rexburg, Michigan. Her mother is a housewife and her father works at the Rexburg paper mill. Joy is a better than average student though she has been absent a good deal from illness during the past year. Joy plans to work full-time after graduation and has no interest in going on to college. She got her first part-time job at age 16, as a clerk in a local dime store. When our interviews began, Joy had been working part-time for two months as a YETP clerical aide at Rexburg Junior High School.

Tien Van Chin: Age 17 • Indo-Chinese • Portland • High School Equivalent Training; No GED • YETP •

Tien is an intense and outgoing young man, with a pale, broad face and an alert expression. He speaks English rapidly, and though he still has problems with idiom, he has an obvious fondness for American slang. Tien immigrated from Vietnam on his own, at age 14. He came to Portland after spending nearly two years in a refugee camp in Thailand. Though he was an advanced student in Vietnam and attended school in the camp as well, Tien was not able to improve his English skills enough to pass the GED examination. Before enrolling in the YETP program, Tien held a number of different low paying jobs. When our interviews began, Tien had been a YETP participant for one month, and he was receiving support to study computer programming at a private business college. Tien lives with five other young Indo-Chinese refugees.

Mark Westgate: Age 17 • White • Kalamazoo County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Mark has the standard good looks, personable manners, well modulated voice, and projective personality of an entertainer. He is interested in singing and acting. During the past three years, Mark has performed before large audiences in a number of local musical and dramatic productions. Mark is also on the honor roll, and he considers himself "one of the top two or three students" at Camwell High School. Mark says he is definitely going to college, and he expects to win a vocal scholarship. Mark's parents are divorced, and Mrs. Westgate supports her three children on AFDC. Mark enrolled in the YETP program during the spring of his junior year. His first part-time placement was on a janitorial crew. When our interviews began, Mark had been working several months as an aide in the high school bandroom.

Lori Wozisky: Age 18 • White • Kalamazoo County • 12th Grade, continuous school enrollment • YETP •

Lori has short blond hair and large brown eyes. Her composure and pragmatism make her seem older than 18. Lori lives with her parents, sister, and brother in Camwell, Michigan. Mr. and Mrs. Wozisky are both enemployed and disabled. As the oldest daughter, Lori has many responsibilities at home. She has also worked part-time during most of her high school years. Lori plans to work full-time after graduation. She would also like to marry her boyfriend, whom she has been steadily dating for four years. When our interviews began, Lori was employed as a part-time YETP clerical aide in the high school counseling office. She began working there as a SPEDY participant during the summer after the ninth grade. Her return was requested by school staff the following two summers. When Lori enrolled in the YETP program in September of her senior year, she was once again placed in the counseling office as a clerical aide.

II. FAMILY LIFE

> I'll tell you what I always wanted most. God, it sounds really dumb, but I always just wanted a normal family. A mother and father who always cared about you, you know? A normal family that grows up together--like you see on T.V. All those families that talk to each other... brothers and sisters that talk to each other and were always concerned about one another...you know what I mean? I always thought that would be the ideal way to live. You know! The baby grew up and had no problems!
>
> Jean Ansel

Jean laughed after she said, "The baby grew up and had no problems". Nobody over 16 really believes in "happy ever after", and Jean knows that people have problems in even the happiest, most secure families. But she wasn't laughing when she talked about growing up in her family, which was neither happy nor secure:

> It was pretty terrible. I always knew it was really bad, but I didn't know why it had to be like that. See, my mother's always had a drinking problem. My parents fought all the time, and they finally split up when I was in the sixth grade. After that I kept living back and forth between my mother and my father. Neither one of them really wanted me in their homes, because I was too much of a problem they thought. So it was like they were pushing me back and forth. I got involved with drugs when I was 12. I started taking pills just to get their attention, you know. But it didn't work, cuz then they just turned against me even more.

Jean isn't sure who or what is to blame for the way things turned out in her family, but she believes that she has had to pay for it. Her self-image, health, education, and aspirations were all affected by the quality of her family life. For Jean, and for many of the other case study participants, the contrast between the image of the ideal family and the reality of her own family experience is sharp and painful. Where do these idealized images originate? And why do so many families fall short?

American Family Myths

Traditionally, the ideal American family has been envisioned as a self-sufficient economic and social unit. This myth of self-sufficiency is built on historical images of independent farming families. In our idealized version of history, the agrarian households of early America constituted economic units in which all members, from young children on up, played important, productive roles. Parents were responsible for nurturing their children, providing them with moral instruction, and training them to be productive workers. Early in life, most children were expected to begin earning their own way by working with and for their families. Later, when their parents grew old, grown children became the chief source of support for extended family units.

The agricultural economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth century encouraged Americans to think of themselves as especially self-sufficient. In the course of the nineteenth century, economic life changed radically. The production of cash crops, like grain and cotton, replaced diversified farming chiefly for family needs. Commercial and industrial work became more common than farming. Most family breadwinners went out to work for wages in factories and businesses. But the myth of family self-sufficiency persisted, and it was closely linked to the work ethic. Industriousness was considered a moral quality as well as a useful trait. Hard work was not only the key to economic success; it also showed good character and indicated a lack of idleness or sensuality. Good families, like good men, were expected to be industrious, and parents taught their children that economic self-sufficiency was achievable for all who were willing to work hard enough.

As industrialization progressed and more Americans lived in less protected urban environments, the ideal family came to be seen as a safe harbor--a bulwark against the raw, competitive, and selfish world. Parents were expected to provide for their children, instill them with positive values, and protect them from the dangers, complications, and moral corruptions of a threatening outside world until they were old enough and strong enough to fend for themselves. Within the protected family unit, pure and generous feelings could still flourish. If the father was economically successful, the mother could stay at home and fulfill the nurturing functions.

Although the concept of families as idealized, cooperative social units has persisted, overtime, the family economy has disappeared almost completely. Most American families do not work together at common economic enterprises upon whose success they collectively depend. As the Carnegie Council on Children stated in 1977, "Work and family life are separate enterprises; families consume as a unit but do not produce as a unit." Modern parents do not typically work with their children or see to it that they are trained in parent selected vocations, nor do they expect their children to provide them with support when they grow old. Today, most parents' objective is to bring up children who will be happy and successful at whatever they themselves choose. While parents do not direct their childrens' work lives, they are still expected to protect and support their families. During the past four decades, there has been a growing tendency among middle class parents to prolong the protective status of childhood--often until their offspring reach their early 20's. More advantaged young people may feel that their only responsibilities are to accept a good education, stay out of trouble, and eventually forge ahead--not for the sake of their parents but for the benefit of themselves and the new families they may someday found.

Children have more and more come to be regarded as "dependents" in the economic hierarchy rather than contributors. Today's parents have children despite their cost; for if children were once an economic boon to the family, they have now become an enormous financial liability. The costs of feeding, housing, and clothing a child from birth through high school add up to more than $50,000 by even the most conservative estimates. For the many parents who support their children through more years of schooling, the financial drain is considerably greater and may extend for 22 years or longer.

In our society, where work is valued more for the cash income it provides than for its confirmation of moral worth, child rearing has come to be seen by many as a nonproductive job. Fewer and fewer individuals in our society pursue child rearing on a full-time basis. In the 1970's, for the first time in our country's history, the typical school-age child had a mother who works outside the home. While some women choose to combine child rearing and careers in order to expand their arenas for self-expression, growth, or social contribution, most mothers work out of economic necessity. As inflation rises and buying power decreases for many workers, two-income families are becoming a new norm. There are many families where both parents work and still don't earn enough to provide adequately for the basic needs of their children.

At the same time, single parent families are becoming more common. Though death and desertion have always disrupted a percentage of families, traditionally, most families remained intact until the children were grown. Marriage was considered both a prerequisite for child bearing and a permanent institution. Personal expectations regarding marriage have changed, and divorce is viewed with greater tolerance. Since the turn of the century, the incidence of divorce in the United States has increased by 700 percent. Though the increase is partially accounted for by a growing population, the rate of divorce has also expanded dramatically. An estimated one out of every three marriages today ends in divorce, and divorce is as common among those with children as it is among childless couples. In addition, more unmarried women are bearing children. The proportion of first births to women who have no marriage partners has more than doubled--from five percent in the late 1950's to 11 percent by 1971. It is estimated that four out of every ten children born in the 1970's will spend part of their childhood in a one parent family.

For the majority of Americans, the self-sufficient, protected, and protecting family has always been more of a myth than a reality. But few people would disagree that today's parents are more dependent on others for help and support in raising their children than were most parents in the past. If the lives that parents are leading are demanding and complex, the lives that their children will lead in the future will be even more so. Many parents feel they cannot have--and may not even want--the traditional kinds of direct supervision over their children's lives. Families look to outside institutions and professionals for expertise and guidance. Medical care is provided by physicians. Child psychologists and developmental specialists pass judgement on child rearing techniques. Schools are expected to not only educate children for productive roles in an increasingly complicated economy but to teach good work habits and formulate good character as well. The transmission of basic values has long been thought a primary responsibility of parents, but in our rapidly changing world, many parents are confused about their own roles and values. They doubt the validity of their own standards and tend to dilute them drastically when passing them on to their children.

Living With the Myths

The American family has changed, but the old myths persist. Young people seem to grow up with a strong image of the ideal family and an even stronger awareness of the ways in which their actual family lives differ from this mythical norm. According to the young men and women in the case study group, a "normal" family includes two parents, who love each other and who stay married. At least one parent (preferably the father) works outside the home and earns enough money so that family members can have the things they need (a nice house, clothes, food, transportation) as well as some extras (equipment, vacations, entertainment, etc.). The case study participants believe that "normal" parents enjoy their children's company, and "normal" families do things together during their free time. The brothers and sisters in these model families like each other and get along well together. The parents expect and encourage each of their children to do well. They set standards and may even enforce penalties for misbehavior, but they are not arbitrary and they don't try to "run their children's lives". These are the standards against which most of the case study participants gauge their own families. Very few measure up.

The majority of the case study participants did not live with both parents. Of the 32 young people in the case study group, 20 spent at least part of their childhood in a single parent household. In all but two cases, the parent remaining with the child(ren) was the mother. In this respect, the case study group is typical of a broader population of low income youth. In a 1978 survey of economically disadvantaged 16 to 19 year olds, conducted prior to the implementation of the YIEPP program, only one-quarter of the youth polled lived with both parents. Over one-half lived with their mothers alone. Not all female-headed households are economically disadvantaged, of course, but poverty is much more prevalent in families where only one parent is present. Over half of the female-headed families in the case study group relied primarily on welfare payments for support. Despite low income, a number of these mothers living alone managed to provide their children with a stable and enriching environment.

By the same token, having two parents who stayed together did not guarantee case study participants happy or economically secure childhoods. Felisa Santana and Lori Wozisky live in homes where both parents are present but not employed. Both families rely on transfer payments--welfare or social security--which provide inadequately for their needs. Because of their parents' medical disabilities, and because they are oldest daughters, both Lori and Felisa carry heavy household responsibilities along with busy work and school schedules. Felisa spends a good deal of time caring for her five younger brothers and sisters. Lori has a resigned attitude about the way in which responsibilities are divided in her household:

> I do most of the housework--cleaning...dishes...fixing meals. If I got a day off from work, it's my day to do laundry. I don't mind really, cuz I've been doing it since I was real little. I've been doing dishes since I was too little to reach the sink--because of my mom's arm. My mom does what she can in the house, and my sister, Donna, helps out too. My mom and dad are of the belief that boys don't do housework. My dad doesn't work and he doesn't do anything around the house. My brother feeds the dog and carries out the garbage and that's it.

The emotional quality of family life among the case study group did not often match the cheerful, cooperative climate that they imagined to prevail in "normal" families. Both Todd Clinton and Peggy Bromfield left home at an early age to escape from two-parent, middle income households that were chaotic and unsupportive. Todd's father always earned a good income, and the family never suffered from a deprivation of material goods. But Mr. Clinton's alcoholism, irritability, and frequent verbal and physical abuse made family life insupportable for Todd. Peggy's mother had a hard time controlling her temper. As the oldest child, with a strong temper of her own, Peggy was often the target for her mother's uncontrolled anger:

> It happened sometimes with all the kids, but she used to beat me most. My mom always told everyone that she doesn't like kids at all. So I've always wondered, you know, why did she have five of them?

Many of the case study participants came from families where parents had married especially young and then had a number of children in rapid succession. Most of these unions ended in divorce or separation, but a number continued for many years though they were judged, by both parties, to be a failure. Several participants reported their parents telling them that they regretted their early commitments and stayed married only because of the children and financial necessity. These parents must have felt trapped and overwhelmed by their responsibilities, and they seemed to transmit to their children both a sense of personal inadequacy and a mistrust of the outside world. Several parents, within the case study group, exercised such restrictive control over the family that their children were nearly cut off from experiences and relationships outside the family unit. Lori Wozisky's mother wanted to protect her children so they wouldn't make the kind of mistakes that she felt she had made:

> My mom and dad have always been really tight on us. They wouldn't let us do anything or go anywhere. We were never allowed to go to friends' houses like kids do. We

> couldn't stay overnight with anyone--not even relatives. Between Donna and I, any guy we've gotten close to they just cut them off. They don't want any guys around. My mother got married when she was 15. By the time she was 18, she had three kids to take care of. She tells us that she doesn't want us to ruin our lives like she did hers.

As the oldest child of young and insecure parents, Peggy Bromfield faced a similar situation during her growing up years:

> They were always criticizing me. It was like they were waiting for me to make a mistake. They didn't like to have people in the house, so I was hardly ever allowed to have friends over. I couldn't play outside after dinner. I wasn't allowed to spend the night at a girlfriend's or anything. I hardly had any friends anyway. I always felt like there was something wrong with me.
>
> I didn't understand then why they were like that. But looking back, I think they were probably just scared that something bad would happen or that they would do something wrong. They were so strict with me that I ended up doing everything behind their back. But them being so over-protective didn't prepare me for life at all. I was the first one to leave, and after I got married, they eased up a little with the rest of the kids.

While some case study participants, like Lori Wozisky, Todd Clinton, Douglas Giscard, Peggy Bromfield, and Richard Nielson, felt their parents had been over-protective, imposed unreasonable standards, and restricted their opportunities for growth and learning outside the family, other participants in the case study group had experienced a noticeable lack of parental supervision or attention. The parents in these families didn't treat their children with hostility or burden them with excessive demands and rigid expectations. But neither did they provide guidance or even show much interest in their children's decisions or problems. Some case study participants felt their parents scarcely noticed their existence. They tended to perceive their parents as being incapacitated rather than deliberately neglectful or uncaring. These participants felt their parents were overwhelmed by problems of their own, which left them without the energy, cognizance, or capacity to play a consistent and helping role in their children's lives.

Jack Thrush grew up in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His father died when he was ten years old; and for the next six years, the family lived a precarious existence. Mrs. Thrush worked when she could find employment; in between jobs, the family depended on welfare. Jack's older brother, Dan, took care of him most of the time. The two brothers were very close until Dan enlisted in the Army and left home when Jack was 15. Jack believes that life was very hard for his mother after his father died. She had several unhappy relationships with other men and finally remarried the year that Dan left home.

Jack left home the next year at age 16, when he got his first job. After six months of low-paying, part-time work, Jack became unemployed. He moved back home to live with his mother and new step-father, but he wasn't satisfied with family life:

> I prefer not to live at home, but I guess it's the best I can do for now. It's clean and there's enough food and everything, but my parents, uh, I don't know...They're real busy so they don't have time to understand things very good or stuff like that. We don't fight or anything, but since my dad died, my mother and I don't communicate much. We never do stuff together, and they don't get involved in my life at all. I wish we could be more a part of...like a unit or something. But my mom's been through a lot--that's more or less what it is--and it's like she just can't afford to get involved or something. Sometimes my step-dad will try to talk to me, but you know he never really gives me any advice or tells me what's really going on with him. Maybe he just doesn't want to get me involved in his problems.

Sandy Bonds is another participant who believes her mother was too absorbed by problems in her own life to respond adequately to her children's needs. Sandy's parents divorced when she was in the third grade. Sandy was living with her mother and step-father in Maryland when she first started getting into serious trouble at school. Her mother decided she was not able to handle her, and Sandy was shipped off to live with her father in New Mexico.

> I know I wanted more attention, but I don't think it was really my mother's fault. She had a lot of problems of her own. I don't know that much about her background, but she was a foster kid. I think she dropped out of school in the eighth grade. She always had financial problems. See, at first my family had a lot of money. They were upper-middle class, I guess you might say. Then when my father left, we dropped down to lower class. Then my step-father was a truck driver, and that business is kinda slow.
>
> There's lots of things she didn't teach us--stuff we should've learned about getting along in the world. It was like she wasn't there half the time or somthing. But I don't think it was her fault. In her own strange way, I think she cared about us kids. She wouldn't tell us what we should do, but she'd always say, you know, "Look at me...you can do better." She wasn't much on understanding what was going on with me or the rest of the family. When a problem arose, my parents would... sort of...well, they just didn't understand the problems. And they didn't know how to solve them anyway. And neither did I.

Within the case study group, there were a number of participants who spent substantial parts of their childhood or adolescence in households where no parents were present. These young people didn't leave home; through death, divorce, or desertion, their parents left them. In each of these cases, the youngster was fortunate enough to have a relative that was willing to provide some support and supervision. Typically, this person was an older brother or sister. When the Youth Perspectives interviews began, four case study participants were living in households headed by a sister or brother.

Like Harold Thomas, whose stable family life in Virginia was shattered by his parents' death, Bobby Jones lives in a public housing project in Boston with his older sister and younger siblings. When Bobby's mother died, he was 14. Janice, Bobby's older sister, was only 19, but she assumed responsibility for the three other Jones children. Janice supports the family with welfare payments and money she earns from her job as bank teller. This is what Bobby says about his life since his mother died:

> Janice's done the best she could for us. But it was like... well, things were better when my mother was livin'. I went to school, played outside after school, came inside at a certain time, done my homework. You know, that was it. I never was really like hangin' in the streets back then. Well, maybe in the summer I was in the streets, you know. But I never really got bad then. I could control myself, keep myself out of trouble.
>
> When she died, I never really felt...uh...It really hurt me when she passed away. But you know, it seemed to everyone like I was the kind of person, I could get over it real quick. After awhile I just didn't think about it. I depend on *myself*. You know, I never really fell back on nobody.
>
> Janice...seemed like she couldn't really tell me what to do. I mean, she always just *tried* to tell me, you know, "Go to school, study, get *in* something!" But if I wanted to do something, I wouldn't *ask* her about it; I would *tell* her what it was I was going to do.

Yvette McDermott lives in Portland. She's been married since she was 16 and has a two-and-a-half year old son. Yvette has never met her father. When she was growing up, her mother, who was a prostitute and a heroin addict, was rarely home. Yvette was frequently left alone. When she was old enough to get away, Yvette would go across town to her grandmother's house. Yvette's mother didn't want her daughter there; the two women didn't get along. But Yvette preferred her grandmother. She says:

> I grew up behind a whole lot of worries. I don't know what I would have done without my grandma. If she hadn't looked out for me...Just seemed like she was always there--workin', takin' care of everyone.

The majority of the case study participants reported family experiences that ranged from mildly unpleasant to truly horrifying. Through their own determination, and in many cases with outside help, these young people managed to survive and grow. But the full impact of growing up "behind a lot of worries" is hard to assess. These participants were aware of the negative effects of troubled home lives. Though some felt that their family difficulties had forced them to be self-reliant, they also felt at a disadvantage in competing with young people whose family relationships were supportive and secure. Many of the case study participants must struggle to overcome the effects of negative family experiences in order to establish themselves as productive adults. But not all of the case study participants came from troubled homes. Let's briefly explore some of the more positive family experiences within the case study group.

Strong, Supportive Families

While very few families fit the ideal image in every detail, many parents do provide their children with strong and supportive family environments. Within the case study group, there were also young people who felt their family lives were, by and large, happy and rewarding. What makes family life "work" for some youth? Successful families are worth a closer look.

During the Youth Perspectives interviews, participants were encouraged to offer their opinions about child rearing techniques. Each was asked, in varying forms, the following question: If you were responsible for a child, would you raise him or her much the same as your parents raised you? From many participants, this question triggered emphatic negative responses followed by more thoughtful suggestions about ways in which they could improve on their parents' child rearing practices. But nearly one-quarter of the study participants said that for the most part, they would try to replicate their parents' behavior. These young people went on to describe positive aspects of their own upbringing. About half of those who were satisfied with their family experiences were from stable, intact families; the others came from supportive single parent households. The perspectives and experiences of both groups are quite similar.

Vivian Lincoln lives in Portland with her parents and her older sister, Mary. Financial circumstances in the Lincoln household have been very tight since Mrs. Lincoln was injured in a car accident two years ago. Though all the Lincolns have had to make adjustments, Vivian says she is satisfied with the quality of her family life:

> I like living at home. My parents are great. They prepared us for any hard times, rough times--so it hasn't been too bad. They're a lot of help to me, and they're pretty understanding about things. They care about my decisions. Like, if they don't think something's right, you know, they wouldn't let me do it.

> I try to help out around the house. There's certain things I have to do--clean my room and the living room, do dishes--things like that. And in my family, there's rules, like no dating until 17. I won't be 17 until August. Sometimes it seems like that's too long to wait. But it was the same way with my sister, and now she goes out all the time. So I guess my time will come.

Sven Latoka lives in Jamaica Plain with his parents and two younger sisters. His older brother, a marine, is stationed in Virginia. Sven's mother is a full-time housewife. His father has been a carpenter and a fisherman. During our second interview, Sven talked about his family life:

S: I've liked living at home. My parents are fine. No arguments with them, you know. Soon, I expect, I'll be moving out on my own, though.

I: If you're making a decision about a job or something else that's important to you, would your parents get involved?

S: Yeah, they help me a lot. Now I'm of age, I'm a man, and I basically take care of my own. But I'd let 'em know, like...yeah, like if I got a job. They have anything to say to me, they probably would speak right up. They don't stop me from doing what I want. They wouldn't do that. They think I'm doing something wrong, though, they'll correct me.

I: Do you make any financial contribution to the house?

S: Yeah, yeah. I have to pay room and board--thirty dollars a week.

I: Does that seem reasonable to you?

S: Yeah. Yeah, it does. That's one reason I haven't moved out yet; on my own I'd have to pay more.

I: If you have children, do you think you'll raise them very much as you've been raised?

S: Yeah. I'll be strict. Because I think they'll be better off in the long run.

I: You think your parents were strict?

S: Yeah. I know they were. I always knew from them what you should do and what you shouldn't do. But they didn't use force. My father's hit me a couple times in my life. I was never beat. But when I did something wrong, I knew it. And I had ground rules--come in at a certain time

> and stuff like that. If I didn't come in, I couldn't go out the next night. Smarten up to it, you know? When I was younger, I had an allowance. I had to earn that too. Taking out the rubbish when it had to be. Uh, painting ceilings...doing things over in the house.

I: Why do you think a strict upbringing is good?

S: For one thing, I learned to work. How to do a job. And, well, when I see how many kids were out all night long, young, and now I take a look at them; they don't seem to be doing very well. I know I'm just about one step ahead of anybody that's had no...no discipline. I had curfew till I was 18 years old. I always had a job--at least part-time. And I've been pretty independent. My parents let me make a lot of my own decisions, but they taught me that you have to do certain things. You have to keep a good attitude about yourself in order to have a decent attitude towards other people.

Luanne Clawson lives in an apartment in Boston with her mother and younger sister. An older sister is married andno longer lives at home. Luanne's parents have been separated for over ten years. Her mother has worked in the past, but the family currently receives AFDC payments. Luanne has seen her father frequently while growing up, and sometimes he helps the family out financially. But her mother is clearly the chief figure in Luanne's life.

> My mother is really concerned about me. She's taught me a lot. You know, she tells me things I have to know about when I get my own place. You have to get out there and work, pay your bills on time, and stuff like that. She wants me to really make something out of my life, you know? So I feel like I don't really have no problems just so long as I come to her first and let her know what I'm going to do. I like to know if it's all right with her.
>
> If I had kids, I'd raise them just like I was. Yes I would, really. I'd teach 'em right from wrong. I'd tell 'em, you know, don't do such and such a thing. But I wouldn't keep nagging them about it. After I told them, you know, if they feel that they can make up their own minds on it, I'd let 'em go. But there's certain things...Some things, I'd make them go by my rules--what I say--while they're living with me.
>
> I'd try to do just like my mother. Cause my mother's doing hard things, you know. Trying to make it, makes us good clothes, tries to give us money when we need it--just everything.

Jessica Jackson's parents weren't married. She's never met her father. But her childhood was relatively happy, and she's always had plenty of attention. Jessica lives in Bremerton, Washington, with her mother. She's a senior in high school, and she works as a medical aide at the hospital. Jessica lives in a single parent household, but she really has two parents. Her grandmother lives next door, and she has always been involved in Jessica's life.

> I learn a lot from my grandmother, because she knows so much. I feel that she knows even more than my mother. My mother and I do things together. Sometimes it's more like we're sisters than mother and daughter. I call my grandmother "mom".
>
> Both of them are involved in my life totally--all the way. They follow me like little hens sometimes. But nearly every time my grandmother tells me something, she's right. It's amazing how things happen just like she says.
>
> I'll try to raise my kids just like I was. Totally. I was taught to get along with people. Taught to try to do what was right. So I think it was good. As far as I'm concerned, there's only one way to grow up, and that's the way I grew up.

Common threads are apparent among the case study participants with strong, supportive family backgrounds. Economic circumstances, family size, life styles, and values varied considerably in these homes, but all the young people in this portion of the case study group felt that their parents provided for them to the best of their abilities. They knew their parents cared about them enough to stay involved and interested in their lives. Unlike many of the other case study participants, they felt their parents were really there when they needed them. Joy Tippets, a Kalamazoo County participant, summed up the feelings of this group when she said:

> I don't know how they did it really. I just really feel close to them. And I don't really know how they do that cause, you know, a lot of my friends aren't that close to their parents. But they're always there when I need 'em. They trust me and all that; which is really nice, cause I trust them. When my friends tell me some of the things they've done, I just can't believe it, you know, that their parents wouldn't tell them or try to stop them.

Vivian, Sven, Luanne, Jessica, and Joy all have roles to play in their families and household responsibilities that have to be performed on a regular basis. But beyond all this, each has a set of values for determining ethical conduct. None of these participants grew up in a religiously devout family, but each believed that she or he could distinguish right from wrong in most cases. Their parents set consistent standards and expected these standards to be respected. Within such frameworks, young people seem to feel more secure and to have more confidence in their abilities to eventually manage their own lives. As Benjamin Spock says:

> Children grow up behaving responsibly primarily because they love parents who have loved them. They want to please their parents (most of the time) and be like them. But for this system to work well, the parents must have ideals of one kind or another. They have to know what they expect of their children and communicate it to them clearly.

Though their parents provided examples and set standards for them, the case study participants from strong, supportive families were also given room for individual development. As they grew older, their parents encouraged them to make decisions on their own. Joy Tippets explained how this process worked in her family:

> I was 15 when I got my first job at the store. I was still too young to drive, so I asked my parents what they thought. My mom and dad said, "If you want the job, you should take it. We'll help you out, but it's really up to you." And they were supportive of me and gave me rides till I got my license and all. But there was times when I had problems, and I thought about quitting. They said, "It's your decision. You're the one who's working and earning the money. Only you know if it's worth it to you." So it was all up to me. I had to do this by myself, you know. And it taught me that if you want to do something, then you should try to do it. You don't always have to do what somebody else wants you to do. You can pick your own goal and work for it.

Leaving Home

No matter how comfortable their family lives, most young people reach an age when they want to leave their parents' home and strike out on their own. All of the case group participants were old enough to have at least begun to think about leaving home and to speculate, worry, or dream about how they would live as adults. A number already had considerable experience with life outside of family structures. Their solitary struggles had tarnished their romantic images of independent life, and their fantasies tended to center on the desire for supportive home lives. But for those who had reached the age of 18 or 19 and were still living with their families, leaving home was a major preoccupation. Most were eager to be on their way and felt they were ready for a more independent life:

- Why leave home? I just want to be on my own. My mother's tooken care of me long enough.

- I want to live on my own. Have something that belongs to me instead of to someone else.

- My boyfriend and I have been talking about moving in together. I'd really like to because I don't think we can just get married before we've co-habitated. I think people should live together first, and I think we're really ready to give it a try.

- Soon I'll be trying to get out on my own. Get my own apartment, start doing stuff for myself--you know, doin' my own thing. I want more privacy. You know, it's about that time, that you should get out and be on your own, have your own things.

During the research period, half of the case study participants were living at home with their parents or other adults. Though they had visions of independence, most planned to remain with their families for at least another year and some for considerably longer. What keeps these young people at home? Several of the participants talked a lot about leaving home but seem to sense that they were not really ready for independence. They acknowledged a need for the emotional support that they receive from their parents or other family members. Jessica Jackson ran off to California with a girlfriend when she was 14 years old. She returned home after her brief fling with independence convinced her that she was not ready for life on her own:

> I feel that a lot of my friends, they're at the point where they want to leave home and be on their own. And I tell them exactly how it is when you leave home. It's really bad. Without someone looking out for you, you can get into so much trouble! You have a lot more problems if you leave home.

While emotional ties kept some of the case study participants at home, for most, financial necessity played a larger role in determining living arrangements. Some of the participants received little emotional support from their families and felt they would be happier away from home, but they couldn't afford to move out on their own. Many of the case study participants who lived at home were working only part-time in YEDPA jobs and attending school. Those who worked full-time were earning only minimum wage. The majority of participants living at home were covering only their own personal expenses (like clothing, entertainment, transportation, and meals away from home) with their YEDPA paychecks. Only a few of these young people were paying their parents for room and board, and none were paying as much as it would cost to live independently. Though they received some financial support from their families, most of the participants living at home were not doing much saving out of their small YEDPA incomes. However, several case study participants, like Luanne Clawson, were putting money in the bank on a regular basis:

> I've got over $500 in the bank now, and I figure I need a couple hundred more. I plan to move in with a friend--so there'll be two people on the sharing. But I know it will still be real expensive.

Some case study participants learned about the financial demands of independent life the hard way. Lori Wozisky, Jack Thrush, and Carrie Green all saw their first full-time jobs as opportunities to escape from difficult family situations. All three were under 18 when they moved out of their parents' home and into an apartment with friends. Carrie and Jack both lost their jobs within six months and had to move back home when they couldn't find other work. Lori also ended up back home:

> I got an apartment. I was sharing it with my girlfriend. The rent was good. It was a good district and everything. I was glad to be away from all the hassles at home. But then...moneywise...Well, the car broke down, and it cost two hundred and eighty some dollars to fix. And every day my parents were calling to ask when I was coming home. So finally I ended up moving back.

In spite of the financial difficulties in store for them, some of the case study participants plan to leave home as soon as possible. Most hoped to secure full-time jobs after they graduated from high school or completed YEDPA program activities. These young people were beginning to realize that rent, utilities, and food were expensive commodities and that it might be difficult to find work that paid enough to cover total living expenses. Some were so eager to be on their own that they said they would take any job they could get and figure out some way to get along on whatever money they could make. But others, who planned to go to college or build more substantial careers, had decided that it would be most practical to live at home for a few more years. Richard Nielson and Felisa Santana offered the following comments:

- I'll probably be at home until I establish a career. It would take something better than the job I have now to do it. Even if I keep working and I can pay my own college tuition, there wouldn't be enough money for rent and stuff if I went out on my own.

- Realistically, it will be quite a while before I can leave home. I have to get another job that pays more. Cause I know you have to get an apartment, and rent and all that is real expensive. So it will probably be two years or more before I really get going and get out on my own.

Early and Abrupt Departures

While leaving home was still an aspiration for some of the case study participants, others had been living apart from their families for years. Over 90 percent of the nation's 16 to 17 year old population lives at home with at least one parent. But within the case study group, fully one-half of the participants left their parents' homes before they had turned 18 or graduated from high school. They left for different reasons--some in the midst of intense family conflicts, and some under amicable circumstances. A number left to establish themselves as wives or as mothers heading their own households. Some chose to leave because they couldn't get along with their parents or other family members. Others were told to leave because their parents felt they couldn't handle them and no longer wanted them in their homes. One young man was a refugee, who left his home and parents in Viet Nam for the hope of a better future.

How does a 15 or 16 year old go about leaving home? Let's look at some of the case study participants' experiences.

Douglas Giscard left home near the end of his fifteenth year. He is now 18, a serious and articulate young man with long black hair tied back neatly in a ponytail. "You might not believe this," Douglas says with a laugh, "but my long hair had a lot to do with my leaving home." Douglas describes his family as "pretty well-to-do, conservative middle class people". His father is a manager for a large drug store chain. His mother is a full-time homemaker. Douglas has two younger brothers who still live at home. The Giscards are devout Catholics; Douglas is a non-believer. When he was living at home, Douglas was required to go to church every Sunday, attend a Catholic school, be in the house by nine each night, and keep his hair trimmed above the ear lobes. His objections to these rules led to a series of drawn out struggles with his father.

> We weren't getting along at all. It was hard on everyone, and finally I decided I had to go. My dad and I agreed that it was fine with both of us. In fact it was the only thing that we could do was for me to move out. I moved in with a roommate, and my dad agreed to give me $100 a month. So I'd go my way and live my own life.

David Anderson, who is now 18, also left home because of family conflicts. But he did not choose to go. He is one of the thousands of young people who are removed from their homes each year through legal intervention. Though David has never been charged with breaking the law, he was, at the request of his mother, declared an "uncontrollable juvenile". David is his mother's oldest child; and he says she pampered him when he was very young. David's parents divorced when he was still a baby. His mother remarried when he was two years old and had three children with her new husband. David always had trouble getting along with his younger half-brothers and sister. His step-father would lose his temper frequently and beat David for disobedience or for crying. Then David would turn on his brothers or sister. His mother would threaten to call the police and have David taken away, but he never thought that she would actually do it. When it happened, David could still hardly believe it:

> The day it happened, I had hit my sister. I'd been getting mad at my brothers and sister a lot and hitting 'em. I guess my mom got to the end of her rope. She called the police and they came and picked me up. I was really scared at the time. When I first went into detention, I thought my mom would be back to pick me up the next day or something. But it didn't happen that way. She didn't want me back at all. I spent 43 days in detention before I was moved out to here.

Jean Ansel, the young woman we heard from at the beginning of the chapter who wished for a "normal" family, was not yet 15 when she left home. She started taking barbiturates when she was only 12. She got the drugs from older friends. She was living with her father and his girlfriend when she started using heroin at age 14.

> Well, when I was hooked on downers, the only reactions I ever got from my father were just...There was really no communication going on at all. They would tell me how stupid I was and this and that. But there was no real caring. They never made no effort to say anything like, "Why don't you stop?", "You need help.", "Can I help you?", or nothing like that. And that's what I wanted to hear before I could tell myself to stop. But with heroin now, like he'd be finding needles. He always went into my bedroom and was always finding needles, but I always convinced him I wasn't using it. Then the last night that I lived there, he made me show my arms. Right then that proved it. And that's when he kicked me out.

When Tien Van Chin left his home in Saigon in 1975, he was only 14 years old. During the period immediately after the communist takeover, the city of Saigon was in tumult. Tien's school was shut down. He says that food was scarce; people were living in the streets and lining up at warehouses for rice. People like Tien's parents, who owned a plastics manufacturing plant that had supplied the South Vietnamese Army, were making arrangements to flee the country. The Chins paid over $400 in gold to the owners of a small fishing boat for Tien's passage out of Viet Nam. Although their own prospects were not good, the older Chins decided to remain in Saigon.

> My parents stayed. When you live somewhere too many years, you don't want to just left there. You can't go and just leave your assets. My parents let me go. They understand I make a chance by myself. When they turn the country over to North Viet Nam, I know I will not be able to learn a occupation. That's why I go. I took a choice to come

> here. I have hear a lot of the United States. I believe it is the best place for young people, to come here, learn to get ahead for themselves.

Landing Places

What happens to a young person who leaves home at 14, 15, or 16 years of age? Once they have jumped out of the nest, or been pushed out, where do they land? Some of the study participants who left home early found safe landing places and made a start toward independence. Others were not so lucky and found life on the "outside" to be even harder than their lives at home. Most were in for some difficult years. Let's follow the four young people whose departures we have tracked.

In some ways, Douglas Giscard was prepared to be on his own. He was used to doing chores around the house; and when he moved into an apartment with a friend, he found it easy to cook, clean up, and take care of himself. His relationship with his parents improved almost immediately. He enjoyed his new privacy and independence. But he soon found that the $100 a month his parents were willing to give him wouldn't stretch far enough to cover his expenses, and he couldn't find a job that fit in with his school schedule. So Douglas and his roommate started dealing drugs to make ends meet. This new enterprise was so successful that Douglas decided to quit school and embark upon a life of crime. For nearly two years, Douglas lived very well off the proceeds of illegal drug sales and periodic burglaries. He says he never really saw himself as a criminal, but it was an easy way to make money--until he got caught. In 1978, Douglas was arrested while leaving the scene of a burglary with two thousand dollars worth of antique watches and jewelry in his pockets. The juvenile court allowed Douglas to remain on his own, but he was ordered to find employment so that he could pay the court fees.

David Anderson's mother never came to take him back home. After being held in a juvenile detention facility for 43 days, David was assigned to a group home in the country. At first he was uncooperative and resentful at being shipped away from home. But the group home turned out to be a good place for David. He was able to attend high school on a regular basis; and he was referred to the CETA program, which placed him in a part-time job at his school. David says the people at the group home are fair. The restrictions are few and reasonable. Through counseling sessions and interaction with others at the group home, David was able to sort things out and gain a better understanding of his own behavior and family experiences.

> It's a good place to be if you want help in getting through problems or learning to deal with other people, because there's always new people coming in and they're all different. The house parents are really outstanding people. They've helped me a lot. We have both individual and group counseling.

> I understand what happened to me a lot better now. My step-dad in many ways is a typical male. If he's got a son that's 16 or 17 who cries when he gets hurt... well, that's just not "man" to him. So he gets mad and he hits me. And I just couldn't handle that, because I've got feelings too. I don't care if I'm a man, woman, boy, girl...I just, umm, instead of crying, I'd just bottle those feelings up inside. Then somebody would tip it off. And I'd blow up, and it would all come out. That's when I would hurt somebody. I just feel like I can handle it all a lot better now.

When Jean Ansel left her father's house with needle marks on both arms, she was in for several really rough years. At first things looked as if they might work out well. Jean had a "straight" friend at school who knew of her addiction. This young woman's parents sometimes took in foster children. The morning after Jean's father threw her out, she showed up at school because she didn't know where else to go. The first person she ran into was her friend. She told her what had happened, and together they went to a teacher with the story. Arrangements were made to place Jean as a foster child in her friend's home. The family was especially supportive. They saw Jean through her heroin withdrawal. But, ironically, Jean found she was unable to sustain herself in the "normal" family situation she had always desired:

> They were really wonderful people. They really helped me out a lot. But like...that was in February, and come June, I just couldn't handle living there. It was too much of a family situation. Umm, you know, like they had the mother, the father, the family. And I hadn't been used to that. Even when my family was together, we weren't like that. They were all so much nicer than me. It made me feel worse somehow. And it was just like... it was just too straight.
>
> But it was really hard to leave. I knew I had to get up and go. I told them I was going to try it again at my father's house, and I went back there for like two weeks. I tried to do it at my father's house, but it didn't work at all. It was weird; I couldn't really make it there, but it seemed like that was where I belonged.
>
> Then I was staying at a friend's house. And I started seeing a drug counselor over at ATR. I was drinking then instead of doing drugs. And she, my drug counselor, put me in this shelter home. I stayed there for awhile. And from there I hit the streets.
>
> Umm...Out on the streets, I wasn't working. It's kind of a blank. How was I getting my money? I think...I was doing odd jobs, I guess. (pause) I hate to admit

> it, but I was also "tricking". That whole time I can't remember too well, and I don't like to remember it either. It went on, on and off, for over a year.
>
> Finally I contacted CSD, Children's Service Division, and last January, they were able to put me on a program. They had an independent living program, where they give you money each month, but you have to go to school and look for work. I was going to night school, and I came to the CETA program to get a job. Things got a lot better then. I had my own apartment, and I was working with the deaf kids--where I work now.

Tien Van Chin celebrated his 15th and 16th birthdays in a refugee camp. He finally made it to the United States after spending two years at the camp in Thailand. Tien was relocated in Portland under the sponsorship of a church agency. He was 17 years old and wanted to go to the university and study international relations. But he had no money and his English was limited, so he began a series of factory and restaurant jobs while he studied English at night. Eventually, Tien heard about youth employment and training programs. He applied to the YETP program and received financial support to attend a private business school. Tien is studying to be a computer programmer so he can support himself while he goes through college. He lives in a cooperative household with five other young Vietnamese men. Three younger boys go to high school and work part-time. Two older ones work full-time. They all pool their earnings and share housekeeping duties. Among the group of young refugees, Tien's English is the best so he handles most of the household business.

Adolescent Parents

Six of the 16 case study participants who left home before high school completion were adolescent mothers. While young men, in general, were more likely than young women to leave their parents' home at an early age, all but two of the female case study participants who moved away from home permanently before age 18 were teenage mothers. The 1978 Youth Entitlement Survey indicated that nine percent of all eligible youth are, themselves, heads of households. Most of these are unmarried females with children. An estimated 23 percent of the economically disadvantaged 16 to 19 year old women in the geographic areas covered by the survey had at least one child.

While overall fertility rates of young women have been falling during the past 15 years, fertility among unmarried women is rising. Between 1965 and 1976, the percentage of births among unmarried women, ages 15 to 19, doubled. Not only are pregnancies on the increase among unmarried teenage women, but the number of these young women who choose to keep their children and raise them alone is rising. Adolescent parenthood is a lifestyle alternative being chosen by a growing number of teenagers. In addition to the six case study participants who were already mothers, two other case study participants faced parenthood during the course of the eight month research period.

How viable a lifestyle is adolescent parenting? Most young women who become pregnant in their early teenage years leave school before graduation. Many never return. Once the baby is born, young mothers face special income and employment problems. Caring for a child is a demanding job which limits a young woman's ability to gain other work experience. When no father is present, teenage mothers usually rely on welfare for support. Each of the case study mothers who remained single received AFDC payments. Long term welfare dependence is often the unfortunate result of early childbearing. It is estimated that one-quarter of the women who bear children during their teenage years depend on welfare payments into their twenties.

Who are the young women who embark upon motherhood alone and in their teens? Statistically, the incidence of adolescent parenthood is higher among economically disadvantaged and non-white females. But the teenage parent population includes young women from every ethnic, racial, and economic group. The case studies indicate that there is no prototype for the adolescent mother, in terms of her personal characteristics or family background.

Genetta Burke, now 19 years old, is one of the two young mothers in the case study group who has more than one child. She lives in an apartment in Boston with her four-and-a-half year old son, three year old daughter, and her grandmother. Her mother lives next door. Genetta is black, as are half of the teenage mothers in the study group. She grew up in Victoria Point, a public housing project less than two miles away from where she now resides. Before Genetta was on her own, she lived with her two brothers and five sisters. Her mother supported the family through a combination of work and welfare. Mr. and Mrs. Burke remained married although they have not lived together for over 16 years. Genetta's mother signed her up for AFDC while she was still in the hospital after the birth of her first child. Genetta and the baby lived with her mother for nearly a year. Then Genetta lived with the baby's father, whom she had dated since age 13, first at his mother's house and later in an apartment of her own. After two years, Genetta asked her boyfriend* to move out of the apartment. She still sees him regularly, and he gives her 25 to 30 dollars each week to cover extra expenses.

Patty Monson, age 18, lives with her 18 month old son in a small town in Kitsap County, Washington. Patty is one of the three young white mothers in the case study group. Patty grew up in Utah in a large Mormon family. Her father, a dry-wall construction contractor moved his wife, five sons, and one daughter to Kitsap County when Patty was starting tenth grade. Patty was in the eleventh grade when she became pregnant. She had been dating the baby's father less than three months. Shortly after she learned of her pregnancy, Patty moved with her family across the county to the town where she now resides. She never told the young man who fathered her child that she was pregnant, and she hasn't seen him since she moved. Patty lived with her parents until her baby was four months old. Then she applied for AFDC and moved into an apartment of her own. She still feels close to her parents, who live less than one mile away. Patty's mother offered to tend her son each day when Patty became a YETP participant.

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*The term, boyfriend, is used by the several young case group mothers who remained on close terms with the fathers of their children.

Why does a young woman of 15 or 16 decide to become a mother? If you ask the young mothers in the case study group that question, they will look at you uncomprehendingly for a moment and then say, "because I got pregnant." And it is true that none of the young women consciously planned her pregnancy; but that is not the entire story.

Hardly anyone doubts that sexual activity among teenagers has increased during the past two decades. More young people are sexually active at earlier ages, and some increase in teenage pregnancy is a natural result of such patterns. Sexually active teenagers are more likely than adult women to conceive. However, increasingly, young people also have more access to birth control information and devices. Many young women, as is evident from the case studies, are sexually active in their teenage years without becoming pregnant. About half of the non-mothers in the case study group indicated at some point during the interviews that they "practiced birth control", which usually meant oral contraception. Several of the young mothers in the case study group admitted an early knowledge of basic birth control techniques and said they had practiced different methods intermittently prior to becoming pregnant. But none reported employing birth control methods of any type during the time directly before conception.

Once pregnancy was established, the young mothers-to-be in the case study group seemed to have had difficulty conceptualizing any alternative to single parenthood. Most felt they were not ready to think about marriage, and none elected to give up her child for adoption. Only one of the young women seriously considered abortion as an alternative to childbearing. In this, the case study mothers were not typical. Each year there are many more unmarried teenagers who have abortions than there are those who give birth. But abortion was not viewed by the mothers in the case study group as an effective but unpleasant solution to a difficult problem; abortion was "killing your baby"--something no good woman would willingly do.

Carmeletta DeVries was the only young mother who saw abortion as a distinct possibility. But she decided to go ahead with the pregnancy though, unlike others in the case study group, she had few positive expectations for motherhood.

> My parents told me if I wanted I could have an abortion, you know, cause it was messing up my life. I mean, I didn't need any baby. I had got pregnant once before, and I had an abortion and I felt...I can't just keep having abortions, you know. Sometimes, I was sorry about when I had the first one. I was sad then, you know. I was 14 or something like that and I couldn't deal with it. My boyfriend was mad. But still, you know, my

> father sit and explain it to me, all the facts or whatever. And I understood 'em, you know. And I decided to go ahead and have the baby. It wasn't that I felt it was the right choice, you know; I just had to have it. You can't just keep going on with abortions. It wouldn't be right. I ain't going to have no more kids though...that's for sure.

Some experts believe that many teenage pregnancies represent a bid for attention or a desire on the part of an adolescent to "punish" her parents for what is perceived as their restrictiveness or neglect. According to this theory, a young woman may feel that pregnancy will give her power over her parents, and she may use her body as a weapon. Benjamin Spock believes that, "(in) even many of the quiet, illegitimate pregnancies at various social levels, it becomes clear that the girl was not really carried away by passion or by infatuation; she involved herself rather cold-bloodedly, without consciously knowing why, because of resentment against her parents."

Others believe that teenage pregnancy represents a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood in which more young women are choosing to participate because of its increasing social acceptability. In some areas of the country, adolescent parenthood has not only become more common, it seems to have become something of a fad. In Montgomery, Maryland, it was estimated that one out of every ten teenage girls would become pregnant in 1979. According to Steve Spenick, a counselor in the county's social services department, "It's become fashionable to a degree. The girl will announce her pregnancy and her friends will say, 'It's groovy.' As a peer group thing, it's encouraged. It means you stand out."

During the past decade, progressive education policies have attempted to ameliorate the stigma and isolation of adolescent parenthood by including pregnant girls and young mothers in regular high school activities, and by providing special child care facilities and child development classes in the schools. Some educators now fear that such programs have made teenage motherhood appear a more attractive and viable alternative to an increasing number of high school age women.

None of the young mothers in the study group chose single parenthood directly for the social cachet it afforded, but the increased frequency and acceptability of single parenthood does seem to have played a role in their decision to keep their babies. Each of the young women who didn't marry but decided to bear and raise her child alone had at least one close friend or relative who was already a single parent, and several had more than one single parent in her immediate family. At the least, the experience of these role models demonstrated to the prospective mothers that single parenthood was a viable, if difficult, alternative.

While increased social acceptability undoubtedly made single parenthood an easier and more likely choice for the teenage women in the case group, the comments of the young mothers suggest that they were also influenced by their romantic concepts of motherhood and needs to prove themselves as women. Their desires to enter the adult world via motherhood were typically linked to a dissatisfaction with the way things had been going for them at home, at school, or in their social lives.

Although several young women who became teenage mothers came from supportive, stable families, most experienced family pressures or problems prior to their pregnancies. Peggy Bromfield felt her parents were both punitive and unaffectionate, and she longed for a happy family and home of her own. Lynn Hazelton, who later lost her son in a drowning accident, became pregnant six months after her brother's suicide when her parents were still withdrawn and grieving. Yvette McDermott's mother was seldom home, and she spent most of her time alone.

None of the young women were happy with their situation at school. Patty Monson had recently transferred to a new high school with higher standards and stricter requirements than her old school had. After years as a successful student, she was distressed to find herself working harder than ever before but getting only "D"'s and "C"'s. Genetta Burke was a good student, but she was one of a small group of black students being bused into South Boston High School, and she faced extreme racial hostility each day. Yvette McDermott, Carmeletta DeVries, and Peggy Bromfield were all skipping school almost as often as they attended during the months before they became pregnant, and their grades were showing the result.

Though pregnancy was typically unplanned and preceded by some unhappiness or dissatisfaction, it was not viewed as a tragedy by most young mothers in the case group. These young women did not see pregnancy as the product of a string of failures; it represented instead the beginning of new possibilities. Motherhood was an adult challenge, one that they planned to meet successfully on their own. Some figured, "When it happens, it happens. Might as well start now." Others associated highly positive images with motherhood in general, and thought it was even better to "have your children while you're young." One young woman said:

> Well, I always wanted to have kids young. I never thought about marriage all that much. I always saw myself walking down the beach--looking real good and got my little girl on my hand, you know. She'd be about three years old, curly, curly hair...And now I've got two. And I'll be walking down the beach this summer, and I'll be looking good.

Though four of the young women felt they were "really in love" during the period when their children were conceived, marriage was not a major consideration for most. They did not become pregnant with the expectation that marriage would result. Peggy Bromfield was the only participant who associated her pregnancy directly with marriage. She was eager to be both a mother and a wife:

> I was really caring for him a lot. I figure, if you really love each other enough to want to make a baby, you should show your love and how much you really want to be together. Starting a kid is more of a bond. My parents didn't like the idea of him being almost eleven years older than me. "Are you sure you know what you're doing?", you know? But my mother got married when she was 15, so she couldn't really say no because she did it too. My dad felt the same way too. And since they could see I wasn't happy without him, they let me get married.

Peggy Bromfield and her husband conceived another child five months after their first was born. The marriage lasted just over a year. When they separated, Peggy was 16 years old and five months pregnant. Her son was ten months old. Yvette McDermott, the only other young mother in the group who married, has had a more successful marriage experience:

> I knew my husband for about three years before I got pregnant. When I knew I was pregnant, I didn't want to just marry him--not to just get married, you know, because I was pregnant. Yeah, I always said I wouldn't do this and I wouldn't do that, but I ended up doin' it anyway! (laughter) After my little boy was born, that's what my husband wanted to do. So I did it. Worked out pretty well too. It really has. I like being married.

For some women, like Patty Monson and Lynn Hazelton, marriage was not really an option immediately before or after pregnancy. But several others said their babies' fathers were ready to marry them at any time, if that was what they wanted. Though they were willing to tackle motherhood in their teens, some, like Genetta Burke, were still wary of early marriage:

> I'm chicken. I don't wanna get married. (laughter) Cause I don't think marriage is for everybody. You know, when you're young and you get married, you break up and stuff. My kids' father, he wants to marry me. But I think that he just want to marry me so he can keep me in the house. (laughter) He can't make me do it, you know, cause we don't stay together now. But if we get married, you know, he would want to live together.

The reality of a teenage father eager to wed while the young mother is wary was not something I expected to encounter. I thought these reports might reflect, to some extent, bravado on the part of the young women in question. But I had the opportunity to confirm such circumstances from the young man's perspective. Adam Sledge, a case study group participant from Boston, was 17 and in the eleventh grade when his girlfriend Cindy became pregnant. Adam was excited about prospective fatherhood. He quit school in mid-year to find a job. He planned that once he was working steadily, he and Cindy could be married. Cindy lived at home with her mother until her baby was born. Adam got a YCCIP job in a weatherization project. He also worked nights as a security guard. When the research interviews ended, Adam's daughter was six months old. He was still waiting for Cindy to decide whether she wanted to marry him:

> Well, Cindy says she's getting on welfare...or she supposedly would. But she never heard from 'em since she went. So I be getting...I be helping her out mostly. She don't get any aid, and her mother's not getting aid, so...so I help out. I'm ready to get married any time, you know. The rest is up to her.

The availability of AFDC clearly affords young mothers more sense of choice over the issue of marriage versus single parenthood. AFDC grants also allow young mothers to move out of their parents' homes and into the adult world, albeit on strained and restricted terms. While AFDC helps to make single parenthood viable for adolescent women, there is no evidence that the availability of welfare payments acts as an incentive for early pregnancy. Most teenagers don't think very realistically about their financial future before or during their pregnancies. If anything, they tend to naively plan that they will go out and get a job once the baby is born. With the exception of Peggy Bromfield, who married, all of the young mothers in the case study group lived at home until their babies were born. AFDC was generally resorted to as the easiest, most practical means of support, when they later decided that they needed to be away from their parents and on their own.

How do the young women fare once their babies are born? How does reality compare to their fantasies of motherhood? If you ask the young mothers in the case group, most will laugh and tell you, "It's a whole lot harder than I thought it would be." For most new parents, the first six months of parenting are the most difficult period. Adjusting to the needs and demands of an infant is especially challenging for an inexperienced adolescent. But while the experience may be sobering, it is also fulfilling and exhilarating for most mothers. As one case study participant said, "A tiny baby...you can see he really needs you. I mean you're his mother!" This also seems to be the time when some young women decide that motherhood is their calling and become pregnant again. In any case, it does not seem to be a time when the teenage mother seriously considers going out to look for a job. Most mothers in the case study group said their infants kept them so busy that they couldn't really imagine taking on outside work.

When their babies were about one year old, most of the young mothers seemed to be able to look at their situation more objectively and to try to assess their alternatives. This is a time when they were apt to seek employment. For some, a job was viewed as a sacrifice because it meant time away from their baby. For others, a job represented a welcome reprieve from a demanding toddler. All needed the money they felt employment would bring. But job hunting was a disillusioning experience. Some young mothers found work on their own before they became YEDPA participants, but most were discouraged when they discovered how few jobs they qualified for and how little those jobs paid. When they became YEDPA participants, none of the young mothers in the case study group had completed high school. Their children ranged in age from eight months to four-and-a-half years. All had limited skills, and several had no previous work experience at all. This was the time that any regrets they might have were bound to surface. Genetta Burke probably articulated her feelings best:

> If I could do it over, I guess I wouldn't have any kids. Now that I, you know, got them, I love them. I wouldn't give them up for nobody. But if I could do it again... well, it would have been a lot easier without them. A lot of times, I've felt like I couldn't do stuff or enjoy myself because my kids were there. But then sometimes I think: maybe there's really nothin' out there to do. You know, maybe I'm not really missing nothin'. Cause sometimes if you don't have nobody in your life, then it don't really mean nothin'. At least I always have my kids to cheer me up when I get depressed. I can talk with them, play with them. They can lift my spirits.
>
> If I could change things, I guess I wouldn't've sat home all the time I did. Altogether, I sat home about two years--doin' nothin'. I wasted time. I didn't get no place. The only real part about it was my kids though. But I wish that...Yeah, I should've finished high school. I mean when I was first there. But I don't know...You know, my mother said that I just don't have any sense. But you know, the thing was...I was just young. I was just tryin' to find out what life was about.

Role Models

Adult role models are important for a young person trying to establish an independent life. During their early years, children look up to their parents and try to be like them. In early adolescence, most young people are concerned mainly with their image and acceptability among their own peers. But older adolescents trying to make the step to young adulthood need grownups with whom they can identify and who can serve as models in their efforts to establish careers and successful personal lives in the adult world.

The case study participants were asked to talk about the adult they felt closest to and most admired during the past two or three years. Participants told what they liked or admired about this person and the ways in which they would like their own lives to be similar or different. For many of those in the case study group, this person was their father or mother. Young people from supportive families, as might be anticipated, were more likely to see their parents as positive role models for their own future lives.

Among the participants who named their father as the person they most admired were several young women. Vivian Lincoln, whose father is an orthopedic supply salesman, says, "I like what he does...how he works. He seems so important. I'd like to be like him in my career." Carrie Green, who was raised by her father in a single parent household, also admires her father for the work he does, as well as for his personal traits:

> He's got a good job; he's a line manager at Brock Incorporated. He's also pretty active. He does different things. Like he golfs, and he goes bowling, and he goes, you know, on trips. And another thing is that he's wise. He's pretty smart in a lot of things. I hope when I get that old, I'm wise. I guess my dad prepared me pretty good for life, because he always told me, you know, "You gotta go out and get a job, and get it yourself. You can't get it from me."

Within the case study group, there were two young men who began working with their fathers on construction jobs during early adolescence. Sven Latoka admires his father and plans to follow in his footsteps:

> I would like to be like my father. I like his trade. He's a carpenter. I like that. And, uh, he's smart too. He knows what's right and what's wrong. You know, you can't really get over on him. He's physically fit, and that I admire. Gives me sort of an example to get going myself. I think he's led a pretty good life, an interesting one. He's traveled, and he's done good by his family--and he's my father!

Todd Clinton, on the other hand, is eager to disassociate himself from his father's fiberglass construction business and establish his own career in another field. Though Todd admires his father's financial success, he does not want to emulate him in other ways:

> I would like to have the money that my dad makes. He's made a lot of money. But he more or less keeps it all to himself. He doesn't broaden himself. He doesn't want his business to get any bigger than it already is, because then he's got regulations. He's afraid that he'd have to hire minorities. He's a real prejudiced person. Like I said, I would like to have his money--and maybe his attitude of how he keeps money. But in anything else, I would much rather be different.

Interestingly enough, several male participants who had reported intense periods of conflict with their fathers still considered their fathers to be positive role models. Douglas Giscard expressed respect for his father though he saw himself living a very different kind of life:

> Well, I really respect my dad because he's got a lot of common sense. I wish I had as much common sense as he's got. He's very careful and he's humble. I like those values. But as far as being different from him, I would like to be more of myself rather than be like society expects.

Participants who felt closest to their mothers usually admired her for her personal characteristics and role in the family rather than her position in the working world. Most of these participants were young women; although one young man said: "I admire my mom most. I like the way she keeps house. I don't do a bad job, but she really does a good job." Young women who saw their mothers as likeable, successful people often said that they would like to do as well with their families as their mothers had but they would like, at the same time, to have more contact with the outside world. These young women saw themselves as differing from their mothers by having careers as well as successful family lives:

> I want to be close to my family like she is and...she seems happy doing what she's doing. But she stays home mostly, you know. I'd like to have a career along with that. Maybe when my kids were younger I wouldn't, but I want to work too.

Young women who grew up in female headed households sometimes came away from the experience with very different perspectives on the role of the single mother. Elvira Taylor, whose mother raised her and three other children alone with AFDC support, told me: "Not that I want any kids right now, but I would like to be living alone with my kids when I have them--not with a husband but on my own." Tina Middleton, who grew up in much the same circumstances, had a very different view: "I don't want to be alone. I don't want to get married and then be divorced. I don't want the responsibility of raising children by myself. It's just too hard!" Prophetically, Elvira's comments foreshadowed reality; before the research period ended, she became pregnant. She dropped out of school and out of the YETP program, and she intends to keep the baby.

What about young people who love and admire parents whose lives in some respects are not successful? Are they programmed to repeat their parents' patterns? The interviews indicated that young people can love their parents and admire some things about them without necessarily identifying with their failures. Adam Sledge, whose mother raised seven children on a poverty level income, has always been told that he is the "image" of his father, a man who was chronically unemployed and eventually abandoned the family. Adam says: "Yeah, I'm good looking too! I look like my father, and I talk like my father. But I like to work. And I love money. (laughter) I already have two jobs, and I'm trying to get a third one." Felisa Santana, whose unemployed parents support a large family with welfare payments, thinks that her life will be very different from her mother's:

> My mother had a rough life. She didn't get enough education when she was young. She was working in bad jobs all her life--first in Puerto Rico and then here. My life will be different, cause I'm getting more education than them...than they had. And I'm...well, I think if I keep studying and working, I'll get a better job than what they had.

Several participants, like Todd Clinton, felt that they had learned something about life from watching their parents' mistakes:

> Maybe it did prepare me for life, after all. I learned a lot from my family experiences. I think I've learned enough to be able to say that I won't make those mistakes that my parents made...that I'm not going to be my parents. That I never want to be. That I'm going to do what I want to do--what I think is best. That I'm going to do it to the best of my ability.

Some young people who either have no parents, or who are extremely alienated from their parents, feel close to other family members instead and want to emulate them in some respects. Several participants, like Jack Thrush, admired their older brothers: "He's married, and he's going to have a family. I'd like to have a nice job and house and everything like his." Some participants held in highest regard the family member who helped the others most and held things together when times were hard. But while they identified with these relatives and wanted to be like them, they generally wished for easier lives.

> I like the way my grandmother's done. She's neat, and she, uh, works. That's what I want to do too, you know. And she takes care of the family. That's the way I'm doing. But she hasn't gotten...well, she hasn't gotten to did a lot that she wanted to do. But, uh...I think I will, you know.
>
> Yvette McDermott

> I'm so much like my grandmother. But I wouldn't want to be put through the stuff she has been. She's had to raise all her kids by herself. My grandfather died when I was five. And my uncles, they were bad, totally. To me, I'm turning out just like my grandmother. I'm the only one in my family that's gone through high school. My grandmother went to college, and I plan on going to college. I look up to her more than anyone, because she knows a lot more than I do.
>
> Jessica Jackson

> My older sister, she's really had it hard. She's taken care of my little sisters and brothers. And she's really given her heart. I feel closest to her. I do everything I can for her. Times have been bad. I'd like to see my brothers and sisters in a place they can call theirs. That's why I plan to go into the Army, so I can do something to help my sister. So I can give 'em a lot more.
>
> Harold Thomas

What about young people who find no role models in their family experience? Within the case study group there were a number of participants who left home at an early age without knowing any adults they felt close to or admired. Trying to function independently with no positive models to serve as a guide is a difficult and frightening experience for a teenager. The lucky ones were able to find sympathetic adults in the outside world who were worthy of emulation and willing to play a sustaining role. After years of foster homes, problems, and unproductive mandatory counseling, Sandy Bonds met an adult who cared about her and with whom she could communicate. This woman was a 25 year old juvenile probation officer, and Sandy marks their relationship as a turning point in her life:

> She was really straight with me. This may seem minor, but she didn't ever lie. Neither do I. I don't like people who lie. There's really no reason for it. Um, I really can't say what exactly it was she did, but she helped me see myself in a new way. She's just a really good person. And it made me want to...made me realize that I could put my life together.

Young people need adults they can admire and emulate. If they don't find them among their families or friends, they will seek them out in other places. Youth program counselors are often surprised to find how much even the most guarded or arrogant young people seem to crave and respond to attention from a caring adult. A tough exterior may camouflage intense needs. Bobby Jones, who says, "I depend on myself. I never fell back on nobody," also tells me that his YIEPP counselor, John, is "interested in me 'specially". Bobby says, "John can't play no favorites here; it wouldn't be right. But I know he got an eye on me 'specially, cause he know I got the potential."

The need for adult support and role models is so great that young people sometimes project inappropriate images that cannot be sustained. Jean Ansel formed an unusually close bond with her drug counselor, one of the first adults she met who was willing to treat her as an equal. This relationship led to some disillusionment:

> My drug counselor, Gloria, now she came...got to know me. We were seeing each other as friends for about two years. She's about the only one I ever let know everything that I was thinking. When she's working, she's a very strong

> person. And I always wanted that kind of strength for myself--the way she could work out problems and just go through with things--I always wanted that. But as a person, she was really very messed up. I got to know her as a friend, you know, on the side. I found out that she was really messed up inside. Like, she didn't know her own life, what was going on, you know, in her home situation or her social life.

Perhaps the most fortunate youth are those with access to successful adults who have enough self-knowledge and control over their own lives to be able to respond to a young person with generosity and objectivity. David Anderson was lucky enough to encounter such a person in the group home to which he was assigned by the juvenile court:

> One of the best things about it here has been Mathew--Mathew Tyler, he's one of the house parents. I admire him more than anybody. I wouldn't want to be a group home parent, but I'd like to be as straight as Mathew. Be as honest and know how I'm feeling all the time. And know how to deal with different situations and with each person that comes in.

Future Families

Family background and early experiences in the home exert strong influences throughout adult life. For the young people in the case study group, family experience is still a dominant force that shapes their concepts of themselves and the world around them. The interview transcripts testify that family related issues are of major concern to the case study participants. They frequently think, and sometimes worry, about their family relationships and earlier experiences at home, and they tend to project their futures in terms of possible family roles.

What kinds of future family lives do these young people envision for themselves? We live in a time when family structures are changing. Some believe that family life in its more traditional forms is dying. However, most of the young case study participants have images of family life that are not radically different from those their parents probably held. The majority of case study participants envision both marriage and children in their own futures, and they hope to establish harmonious households.

Interestingly, the young men in the case study group held family aspirations that were generally more traditional than those held by the young women. This tended to be true regardless of differences in their early family backgrounds. Of the 12 young men in the case study group, only one didn't plan on marriage, and all said that they wanted to be fathers. The average male participant in the group thought he would like to have three children. The young men with the most traditional views favored later marriage and equated marriage with the ability to support a family. These youths tended to have more definite career goals than did other young men in the case study group. Although only a few male participants said they would "require" their wives to stay at home even if they "really wanted to work", most would prefer to be the chief source of family support. These young men felt it was best if the woman was home "taking care of things"--particularly if there were young children in the family. The following comments are representative of this group:

- I wouldn't really want her to work. At least until the children are in school, she ought to stay home and take care of 'em. And then she could work part-time so she would be at home when they get home.

- Uh, I'd rather support her and the children. If she wants to work, maybe...I mean I could see the point in not wanting to be a housewife and constantly in the home. If she can work and be a parent at the same time and take care of the house too...If she couldn't, then I really wouldn't want her working.

- No, I don't think it's a good idea for women to work. She should take care of the house--stuff like that.

- Well, if she just wanted to have a job like at an A & W, or something...I don't think that's necessary. If she had a career, that might be different. But when children are small, they need to be tended to. She will need to make sure they're tended to, first and foremost.

Several other young men also wanted marriage and a family but were willing to consider a more innovative and equitable assignment of family roles. They thought their future wives would probably want to work, and they planned to play at least a helping role in household tasks, like cleaning and cooking. When asked how he felt about mothers working when their children were small, Mark Gurney replied:

> Depends on how old they are. But I think it's up to both ...not one-sided...or not just one that's handling it all. If I said she had to do such and such, that'd be one-sided. You either both work...and if the kids are not old enough, then one of us would work part-time and the other could work part-time too.

In regard to their family plans, female case study participants fell into three major groups. Less than one-third of the female participants fit into traditional patterns. When asked what they planned to be doing at age 35, these young women envisioned their futures in terms of motherhood and marital status. They planned to be married by the time they were in their early twenties. Most felt 19 to 21 was the "best" age for marriage. They wanted two to four children each, and they wanted to have their first child before age 25.

These young women believed that the wife should bear the major responsibility for running the household, but most of them expected that their husbands would "help out" with housekeeping chores. Tina Middleton was already contemplating marriage to her boyfriend though she believed they should live together first for a year or so. Her comments were typical of the more traditional young women:

> Well, ideally, I'm sure Rick would help out. I mean, I might do a lot of the cleaning and stuff, but some things we could share. Rick really likes to cook. In school nowadays there's almost as many boys taking cooking as girls. Even my grandfather likes to cook. He doesn't make all of the meals or anything, but he does like to cook.
>
> I don't know. The father's really important in the family, but he can be around mostly on weekends. But I think the mother should be home all the time. I mean, the father can be there after work and all. The father's real important, but not as important as the mother.

All of the young women in the case study group said they intended to work after marriage, but those in the most traditional segment planned to leave the labor force following the birth of children and to stay at home until their youngest child was at least school age. Most saw this "mothering" period as a positive responsibility rather than as an obligation. As one young woman said: "I wouldn't want to be working and miss the part when they're first growing up; that's the best part of motherhood." These young women expect their future husbands to support the family alone while their children are young.

About half of the young women in the case study group favored later marriages and planned to play less traditional roles. None of the young women in this second segment of the case study group planned to marry before her late twenties, and several said they thought 30 to 35 was the ideal age for marriage. Most said they wanted only one or two children, but several wanted three or more children, though they weren't so sure about how marriage fit in. All but one of the teenage mothers were in this second group; and rather than being eager for immediate marriage partners, some of these young mothers thought it best to raise their children before considering marriage. They seemed to see a husband as someone who might compete with their children for their time and attention rather than as a help-mate or rescuer.

The second group of young women differed from the first group in regard to their attitudes toward work. They did not see their future husbands as family breadwinners. Most planned to keep working through married life with only short breaks for childbearing. Their motivations for future work roles were sometimes idealistic and sometimes quite pragmatic.

- Why would I want to work? To live! Cause if you don't work you ain't got no money and you can't live.

- You can't get through life just sitting around not doing nothing, you know. You can't get what you want. That's one thing. Besides, I always wanted to work--make something or do something--cause it's just...during the day there's nothing to do just sitting at home.

- I'd like to be doing good, you know. I want to work. I just can't picture myself in the house, sitting at home. That's just not for me.

- I'd like to be a very famous doctor. Helping everybody I can. It will be hard when I have children. I would be with them as most of the time as I could, but I couldn't be there all the time, you know.

A third, and smaller group, of female case study participants had plans that didn't fit at all into traditional patterns. All of the young women in this group were career oriented, though their career expectations were very different. Only one thought she might marry, and she planned to wait until after she was 40. Only one of these young women planned to have children. Each of these female participants came from a home where, after a prolonged period of conflict, her parents had divorced. Only one continued to live with her mother after the divorce. None had a close relationship with her father. Although each associated positive images with her career choice and intention to remain single, all carried negative impressions as well of the potential hazards in marriage and family life.

> By age 30, I'd like to have all my schooling completed. I'll have a job with a good challenge--interpreting for legal affairs or working with speech therapy. From what I've seen now, I don't want to get married. If I ever changed my mind, it would be years from now. But I don't think I ever will. Married life can be just too rough.
>
> Jean Ansel

> I'd like to be a beautician. And I'd be living on my own. I might have children, but I don't want no husband. Not at least until I'm 40.
>
> Yvette McDermott

> I'd like to be working in a fairly high position out at the Forest Service--something like that anyway. I don't expect to marry, and I don't plan to have children. The reason is because I like independence and freedom a lot.
>
> Heidi Clark

> I hope I can make it as a carpenter. I can see myself sitting on a rocking chair with my cat beside me and a house with a fence around it. Oh, I would be just sitting there making a guitar. Or I could change the situation around and say, 'the house that I just built for myself'--something like that. Just be...be happy. I'm a feminist. I don't believe in marriage. I don't like the idea. It kind of bores me. I mean, I favor choice. If a woman wants to work, go to work. If she wants to be a housewife, let her be a housewife. Most women with any...with anything, will want to work. Men should figure that out when they get married. I mean, if they figure they're going to get married to have someone watch the kids while they work, then they don't expect that other person wants to work and expand themselves, that's almost crazy!
>
> Sandy Bonds

The young people in the case study group are still trying on roles. It is not realistic to assume that they will live out their lives exactly as they have planned them at this point in time. But their family plans do reflect some of their basic values and expectations. From the participants' comments, we can see how their plans are influenced by early family experiences as well as by their observation and understanding of the outside world. Most of the case study participants intend to marry and establish families of their own. Some want to emulate their parents, but most hope to establish households that are more harmonious, stable, and financially successful than those in which they grew up. Though there is considerable disagreement between male and female case study participants about the roles that they should play as husbands and wives, both groups agree that economic security is a key to successful family life. Most of the young men and women in the case study group believe that their own employment status will be a critical element in determining the quality of their future family lives.

III. COMMUNITY LIFE

> This community could be better. Like people could be helping each other more instead of putting each other down. Some people won't take the time. Like there's not too many things around here for kids. Kids are getting smarter, but there's nothin' for 'em to do but get into trouble. If people would get together more and start helping each other more, things could be better.
>
> Adam Sledge

Community life plays an important role in the development of young people and the perspectives from which they view life. How young people define themselves and go about choosing the roles they will play in adult life depend to a large extent on their interaction with others. Most youth grow up in families and receive academic instruction from public schools, but these institutions exist within the broader framework of communities. The welfare of the community relies on individual members who are able to perceive their own interests in terms of common bonds and who are willing to make decisions and abide by rules that support the common good. Though youth may receive formal indoctrination in school on the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic system, it is through their actual dealings with those around them--in their neighborhoods and local communities--that the true basis is laid for the definition and assumption of roles in broader society.

The quality of community life has an impact on the immediate well-being of the young as well as on their future lives in society. The case studies suggest that young people are astute observers of community life. The case study participants believe that their lives are affected by the attitudes and behavior of adults in the community. They reap the benefits if the community at large sees youth as a resource and is willing to support activities and programs that help to integrate young people into community life in positive ways. In communities where teenagers are viewed in negative terms, as potential trouble-makers whose needs are of interest only to their parents, they are cut off from opportunities for meaningful contribution and may retaliate from alienation or boredom by becoming a community nuisance.

To a certain extent, youth will fulfill whatever expectations are placed on them by the community. Mary Conway Kohler, founder and executive director of the National Commission of Resources for Youth, Inc., believes, "We tend to trivialize young people in this country. We don't take them seriously enough, and we don't realize their tremendous potential for the kind of work that teaches responsibility and makes true contribution and independence possible in later years." That young people are both willing and capable of contributing to their communities in positive ways is demonstrated by the experiences of several case study participants. Mark Westgate shares his musical talent with others in the community through participation in civic theatre productions. Jessica Jackson represents the views of other young people and helps in the creation of program policy through participation on the youth employment and training advisory council in her county. Young people, like Sven Latoka, who worked on YCCIP neighborhood service projects point with pride to the tangible evidence of their work and its impact on the appearance of the community.

Though some of the case study participants believed they were making positive contributions to their communities, there were other young people in the case study group who either felt no sense of connection to the community, or who had defined their roles outside of communal interests and socially acceptable frameworks. "I'm a loner; I stick to myself, and I don't need nobody else," was a comment typical of a number of participants. Others were dependent on society and knew it; they, or their families, relied on public welfare for support, and this dependency was felt by some to be stigmatizing evidence of their inadequacy in the community. A few case study participants had channeled considerable energy into illegal activities, like shoplifting, burglary, or drug dealing, that reflected a negative identification with conventional values. Several others had retreated for some period of time into alcholism or drug addiction.

How do young people view the neighborhoods and communities in which they live? What do the case study participants have to say about their own roles in community life--both positive and negative? The quality of community life and the views that the participants carried away from their experiences varied widely within the case study group. Much of this divergence was related to differences in geographic settings and community profiles. Let's examine the experiences of young people in different kinds of communities.

Rural Areas and Small Towns

> I've lived here all my life, and I like Rexburg a lot. All my family's around here..my grandparents, my uncles and aunts...everybody's here. It's my home. Sometimes though, I go out on a Friday night and there's not too much to do. But I like Rexburg. I like the small town life.
>
> Joy Tippets

Joy Tippets lives in Rexburg, Michigan, a small farming community that's a half-hour drive from Kalamazoo. She is one of nine study participants who live in the small towns or rural areas of Kalamazoo and Kitsap counties.

Kitsap County is a peninsula in the Puget Sound region of Western Washington. Bremerton, Kitsap County's largest city, has a population of only 37,000. The rest of Kitsap's 116,000 people live in the wooded countryside or tiny towns that nestle in the hills along the county's extensive shoreline. Seattle, the major city in the Northwest, is over an hour's ride by ferry boat from Bremerton.

Kalamazoo County is in Western Michigan. Nearly half the county's 200,000 people live in or near the City of Kalamazoo, an established manufacturing center with a busy shopping area, a university, and many stately Victorian homes. The city is surrounded by flat expanses of Michigan farmland dotted with smaller community centers like Cooper, Galesburg, Oshtemo, and Schoolcraft.

Kalamazoo and Kitsap are thousands of miles apart, and they differ dramatically in climate and landscape; but they encompass communities and life styles that are similar in many important respects. Each county has an urban core in which population and economic activity is centered, and each has extensive outlying areas that are more rural than suburban. What is community life like for young people who live outside the urban centers?

Life clearly has different dimensions for those who live in the country than it does for city dwellers. To begin with, there is the expansiveness of sheer physical space. Young people like Lynn Hazelton, who can walk for 20 acres from her home before coming to another house, have access to a kind of privacy that would be impossible to achieve in more densely populated areas. Most of the case study participants who lived in rural settings were appreciative of the spaciousness and natural beauty of their surroundings. Some could scarcely imagine life in a crowded city:

> I've got my trees and animals, and I like being around nature. I wouldn't want to live in a city. I don't think I could live without animals around. All those people so close together and everything...
>
> Tina Middleton

> I like to see the seasons change. Winters and summers, each has its good parts. Picking berries in the fall... stuff like that, you know, it wouldn't be the same in the city.
>
> David Anderson

> I just like the land. I wouldn't never live in the city. If I ever get a house, it has to be on at least five acres --room for at least one horse.
>
> Mark Gurney

In small towns and rural areas, where people tend to know their neighbors, a stronger and more cohesive sense of community seems to prevail. Being known in the community provides a sense of security for some young people, like Joy Tippets, who spend their lives surrounded by relatives, long time friends, and neighbors. The closer knit social fabric of small communities and the high degree of personal visibility can also result in the kind of supervision and potential for exposure that make it difficult for young people to get into trouble. "You gotta watch what you do around here," one young man said. "I know the police officers and just about everyone else for that matter. If they see me do anything, my parents would hear about it for sure."

Small, stable communities may support a variety of activities that teach young people traditional values and skills. Small town and rural participants in the case study group were more likely than others to have been actively involved in organizations like 4-H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Explorers. Sports, particularly high school football, baseball, and basketball, are typically supported avidly by the entire community. Outdoor activities like hunting and fishing offer another source of recreation that often involves both young people and their parents or other adults. Several case study participants said they frequently spent time working or playing outdoors with their families.

Geographic isolation increases the dependency of non-urban dwellers on the automobile. In the less populated communities of Kitsap and Kalamazoo counties, the distances between participants' homes, schools, and places of work preclude walking, and bus service is non-existent. The social activities that these young people enjoy, like movies, bowling, and trips to the city, also depend on private transportation. Young people in the small towns and rural areas covered by the case studies were much more likely to have cars than were urban dwelling participants. In several cases, participants had enrolled in YEDPA programs primarily to earn the money to buy or operate a car of their own. In addition to being a necessity for some and a significant expense for most, cars also seemed to be a major source of recreation for young men in small towns and rural areas. One participant from a small Kalamazoo township said:

> In the summer that's all you hear twenty-four hours a day are stock cars. There's young guys all over here with stock cars--working on the races, cycles up and down the road...You don't get any sleep in the summer.

While rural and small town life provides comfort and security for some young people, its cohesiveness and clannishness makes others feel confined or excluded. The community ties which link some persons exclude others who reject or transgress communal definitions. While poverty alone is rarely a basis for condemnation in such communities, young people whose older brothers and sisters have been in trouble, whose parents are unemployed, or whose families receive welfare may be unfairly stigmatized. Most of the case study participants who lived in non-urban areas described their neighbors as friendly and easy to get along with, but others complained about the "nosiness" of people in small towns. One young, single mother said:

> What's bad over here is people talking about you. Everybody's trying to know your business all the time. I just want to be with my little boy and my boyfriend. I'd like to get away from all that talk...live my life. It's okay here, but it just ain't for me.

The young person who enjoys growing up in a small town is more apt to experience its confinement as he or she gets older. Employment opportunities are limited in rural areas. Part-time and seasonal work typically pays lower than minimum wage, and full-time jobs for high school graduates are scarce in small communities. The case study participants who planned to stay and make their adult lives in these communities were often willing to forfeit broader opportunities for the benefits of non-urban life. Some dreamed of travel; they talked of going to California or to Florida to escape Washington's rain or Michigan's snow, but most thought they would eventually settle down in a small town or in the country rather than in a large city. Others were frustrated by the limitations of their communities and were eager to get out in the world. "I won't be in Hillcrest much longer," Linda Larsen said. "There's just nothing here for me. There's more places that I have to see before I decide exactly what I'm going to do."

Big City Life

> This is my home town, but I have nothing I like about it really...The community looks filthy. That right there... and the crime...It's no place for little old ladies, or any ladies, I suppose. Boston, itself, or anywhere near Boston...you can move out to the suburbs...but anywhere in Boston you have to watch out. And people's attitudes... You see a group of people--for a long time people were friendly around here--now everybody's running around, trying to put one over whenever they can, you know. That's the big change, really.
>
> Sven Latoka

Sven Latoka lives in Jamaica Plain. Like Hyde Park, Roxbury, and Dorchester, Jamaica Plain is a Boston neighborhood. About 45,000 Bostonians live in Jamaica Plain. Though it's not the inner city, its environment is far from suburban. Once the home of European immigrants, who lived in neatly painted wood frame houses and worked in its tanneries and breweries, Jamaica Plain has become a neighborhood of sharp contrasts. In the north, there is the Bromley-Heath public housing project with predominantly black and Hispanic residents; then there is the largely Spanish-speaking Hyde Square. Next is the central business district, which is encompassed by the white working class and a growing number of young white professionals. And to the south are Jamaica Pond and Moss Hill, enclaves of the well-to-do.

Racial, ethnic, and political tensions run high in Jamaica Plain. In the 1970's the minority population, mostly black and Hispanic, has grown from 16 percent to 33 percent. Many white residents are alarmed by the minority influx. The concerns of the Summer Hill Association, which represents a largely middle class area in south Jamaica Plain, have little in common with the agenda of the Tenant Management Corporation at the Bromley-Heath housing project to the north. The Latoka family belong to the white working-class portion of the community and Sven admits that he is "prejudiced": "I don't like the Puerto Ricans, and I don't like the black people. They're closing in on this place."

In its ethnic and racial diversity, Jamaica Plain is different from the all white neighborhoods of South Boston and the predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods of Roxbury. But in its extremity of polarization and racial tension, Jamaica Plain is a mirror of the larger community. There is little question that the court-ordered city-wide busing of school children and the acts of violence it triggered have served to exacerbate the sense of mistrust and animosity which prevails among different racial and ethnic groups in Boston. When asked what they felt were the major problems in their community, every one of the Boston case study participants talked about racial problems and neighborhood fighting. Five of these participants are black, one is Hispanic. Four live in dilapidated public housing projects in Dorchester. By mutually accepted definition, these non-white participants and Sven Latoka are opponents, but their views on community life are not that different:

> I would have to say the worst thing about it here is people not liking each other. Wherever you go around here, it's just like that. In this city, racial problems is really bad. In the neighborhoods, you know, seem like it's the same way. Even if you're the same color...It don't make no sense. It really start from the grown people down. What they say goes down to the kids, and, you know, so on.
>
> Bobby Jones

> Where I'm living at? Not no community up there. Not really, cause some people are prejudiced. There's always fights up there.
>
> Felisa Santana

> Boston's the most prejudiced place, most prejudiced, most racist. Too much killin' and stuff, I mean no freedom to go where you wanna go and stuff like that. I don't wanna live like that all my life. I don't want my kids to grow up livin' like that. Yeah, there's white people here, and there's black people there, and the Puerto Ricans live over there. You know, it's just like you stay here, and I'll stay there, and I'll stay over there. I don't want my kids to live like I lived.
>
> Genetta Burke

> White people come over here to the project at night in cars, trying to run people down. Then when the police catch them and stuff, they, you know, they say they're lost. But when we catch 'em in here or something and, you know, we do anything to 'em, they're looking for us then. But they over here starting their troubles themselves. Cause we don't go over there, you know. If it's done in Victoria Point, there's no way they're gonna get blamed for it. People in the community figger it's us, you know, cause it happened out here. But they come into here, and they do everything and we get the blame.
>
> Adam Sledge

Racial animosity and inter-neighborhood conflict serve to restrict the geographic parameters in which the Boston participants live their lives. Despite an efficient city-wide transportation system, most of these young people limit their activities to the confines of their own neighborhoods. Enrollment in youth employment projects is sometimes limited by residential locality. Several YCCIP and YIEPP projects were based in community centers that were located in, or near, public housing complexes. Apart from occasional excursions to the downtown business area, which is "free territory", some participants rarely leave the housing projects where they live and work. Genetta Burke lives in a changing Dorchester neighborhood. She is careful not to venture into enemy turf. A segment from one of Genetta's interviews illustrates the considerations that affect her movement through the city.

G: Simmons Street, where I live, it's all blacks--well, mostly black people. But then there's this next street right there, and we can't go on this street. Yeah, we can't go down there at all.

I: Why?

G: Why? (laughter) Cause we'd get jumped.

I: So this street next to you is white?

G: Yeah. And they got a lotta racists down there. They got a big park there too. And if you go down to the park, they all hassle you. You'd get jumped, for sure. You might say it's kind of a dividing line. They live on the next street over. The park's right in the middle, and you can't even go that way.

I: Is that a problem for you? Not being able to take your kids to the park?

G: Well, no. Not *that* park. You know, there's other parks, where we go. But they're like further away from where we live.

I: Apart from your neighborhood and the park, do you feel like there's other places in the city where you can't go? Places where you wouldn't feel safe?

G: Yeah. Yeah, *lots*. Like Charlestown, East Boston...I won't go near it. Every time somebody tries to get me to go to like Charles Street, you know, I think, "Nah, I don't wanna go down there, cause I might get jumped!" They say, "Aw, we won't get jumped." But how do you know? I don't take chances.

I: Well, did you ever actually...

G: No, I never got jumped. Well, I almost got jumped by some white boys, but then some people came along and they run off. I did get jumped though by black girls--five black girls. But never, you know, by white people.

I: But you feel you have to be pretty careful?

G: Yeah, around our way, you do. The train station, you know, is in *their* area, but you can go there. They don't usually bother the women, black women. But, you know, sometimes they jump the guys. But it's not just them. It's just that, you know, the black people around where I live, they be...um, you know...They'll knock you down, take your pocketbook--stuff like that.

I: So it's not safe even in...

G: No, it's not. I wouldn't feel safe livin' there even if it was just all black. I wouldn't want to live there. I'd rather live around *all* kinds of people. I want my kids to grow up integrated, with non-racist people. To be able to associate with any kind of people.

Even within the confines of their own neighborhoods or housing projects, the Boston case study participants didn't seem to find a reprieve from conflict. Though residents will rally against threats from the outside, most of the time a climate of mistrust and dissension seem to prevail within the neighborhoods. Some participants said they were not able to trust many of their neighbors. They doubted the credibility of friendship and felt their only alternative was to keep to themselves.

> When my older sister was up here first, she was telling me how good it was--how good she could make it. So we decided to come up here...which was a big mistake. It

looked all right at first. Then I seen projects, all the tracts and stuff...looked like a jail or a prisoner's camp, like in the war. And I found out there was a whole lot of racism up here, and just people hating each other. I never fought until I got here. I keep to myself, but there's no way you can live without fighting here. I really don't know. I don't associate with people much. I just like to be by myself. There's nothing here that I want. That's why I'll be leaving soon.

Harold Thomas

When I was growin' up here even, there was a lot of white people. But we never even associated with them. I'd really like to, you know, associate with different people. Because the people here--I mean if you really look at it--they don't...I mean the girls especially...I don't associate much with other women, because the simple fact is they always out to stab you in the back. You know, like tryin' to get you. Or either they're tryin' to talk to you because they like your old man or something. Maybe other people are different. Like if you get a friend, it's a real friend...not some half-steppin' friend, somebody that'll come into your house, you know, smile in your face, and then take somethin' out of your house the next minute. I don't need people like that around me. But those are the only kind of people who seem to be around me. I feel trapped myself because I can't enjoy people. I can't relax and enjoy bein' with them. Livin' around people you can't associate with...I can't live like that. I can't stay to myself, you know. Well, I can, because I've done it for a long time. But I don't enjoy it.

Genetta Burke

Boston is a beautiful and historical city. For some it offers cultural, educational, and social advantages comparable to few other areas of the country. For others, life in Boston means segregation, animosity, and limitations--compensated for only by welfare payments. Is the level of tension and degree of social segregation found in Boston typical of big cities in general? The experience of case study participants in Portland indicates that another kind of urban life is possible.

A Different Kind of City

> This is a neat town, man. I love it here. Portland is baby soft compared to every other town I've lived in. It's not rowdy; it's not dirty. That's what I like. You can walk down the street and...well, there's not a lot of trash, and drunks, and dead dogs and shit laying all over the place. No one hassles you, and you see nice clean streets.
>
> Sandy Bonds

Situated at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers in northwestern Oregon, Portland is an attractive city. As in Boston, the busy harbor and expanses of water lend added interest and beauty to the cityscape. Though Portland lacks the historicity of Boston, it is a well-kept city that is not seriously eroded by physical decay. With a population of 385,000, Portland is only just over half the size of Boston, but it is Oregon's largest urban center and holds the greatest concentration of minorities in the state. Portland has its problems; it is not immune to the issues of crowding, crime, racial discrimination, and youth unemployment that plague older urban centers. But the problems seem less serious here, and the young people who live in Portland say they like their community.

None of the case study participants living in Portland reported negative views of city life. Some participants said they liked Portland just because it was "home" and they couldn't imagine living somewhere else. But recent arrivals like Tien Van Chin and Heidi Clark were more enthusiastic and specific:

- Well, I think this place is better than some other places. People are friendly, everything look nice, and not too much air pollution.

- I love the way it's green all the time here. There seems to be a sort of togetherness about the people that live here...much more so than other places I've lived. Sort of a friendly atmosphere here most of the time; I've noticed that especially, and I like it.

The city covers a wide geographic area with many different neighborhood centers. Bus service is good in Portland, and participants seemed to move freely around the city, though some complained about the distances they had to travel each day between their homes and jobs. Portland has a decentralized, well-coordinated system for dispensing youth employment and training services. Access to YETP and YCCIP projects was not restricted by geographic location within the city.

Minority case study participants from Portland included two Indo-Chinese, one Native American, and three black young people. None of the non-white participants in Portland believed that racial discrimination played a major role in his or her own life. Though the Portland participants were aware of recent increases in criminal activity in the city (and some had been personally involved in criminal acts), they all reported that their neighborhoods were safe places to live. The freedom from fear of physical attack shown by the Portland participants was more pervasive than that shown by the few participants who lived in the City of Kalamazoo, an urban center less than one-fourth the size of Portland. Several Kalamazoo residents said that they were afraid to walk through their neighborhoods at night, but none of the Portland residents reported such fears.

Though the case study participants enjoyed life in Portland, and most were satisfied with their own role in the community, about half of the Portland participants did not intend to make a permanent home there. Of those that planned to leave, most intended to move outside the city to smaller towns or rural areas within the Northwest. But several participants wanted to try life in a larger city. One who had plans for big city life was a young Indo-Chinese man, Tien Van Chin. While Lui Hueyen, the other Vietnamese refugee in the case study group, said she would prefer life in a small town, like Coos Bay to life in Portland, Tien said: "If I have a chance to go, I intend to move to a really big city, with lots of different types of people. I will have more opportunity there."

Juvenile Crime

Sky-rocketing crime rates, particularly in the major urban centers of the country are a symptom of dysfunctional community life. Young people are both the victims and the perpetrators of a substantial portion of the crimes committed in the United States. About 55 percent of all people arrested each year are under the age of 22. The majority of young people convicted of serious crimes are white males, although a disproportionate number of minority youth are convicted of lawbreaking. In recent years, there have been increases in the numbers of female juveniles involved in criminal and delinquent behavior. Juvenile crime is a serious problem in large cities with a high concentration of low income, unemployed youth, but smaller cities and suburbs have also experienced an increase in delinquent behavior among the young.

Travis Hirschi, of the University of California at Berkeley, defines delinquent behavior as the commission of acts, which, if detected, result in the punishment of the person committing them by agents of the larger society. According to this definition, juvenile delinquency is a widespread phenomenon. Hirschi believes that involvement of youth in delinquent behavior is linked to three factors: (1) a lack of commitment to conventional behavior accompanied by the belief that there is little to be lost in risking one's investment in conventional performance; (2) a lack of involvement or engrossment in conventional activities which results in the time and energy to pursue delinquent acts; and (3) a lack of strong belief or sense of moral obligation to conform to the rules of society regardless of personal advantage.

When viewed from this perspective, juvenile crime appears to be something more than random or senseless behavior. In some communities and some circumstances, young people may see their future as so limited that their interest in the rewards of conventional life is minimal, and they feel little risk in engaging in criminal acts. If they have dropped out of school and have not been able to find work, there is plenty of time and energy for illegal activity. Need constitutes a major motivation. Young people who lack the money or means to satisfy their needs legitimately are more likely to resort to illegitimate methods. Youth are aware of the incentives and precedents in our society for gaining desired objectives by illegal means or at someone else's expense. Among even the non-criminal elements of the community, there is considerable variation in the extent to which people believe they should conform to the formal rules of society.

About one-half of the participants in the case study group reported no encounters with the law, beyond an occasional traffic violation. But though many had never been caught, most of the case study participants said they had committed some kind of property offense during their teenage years. These offenses ranged from the humorous and incidental--"When my horse kicked a car and broke the window, I got scared and rode away."--to the serious--"I had two thousand dollars worth of merchandise on me when I was caught." In small towns and rural areas, the property offenses committed by case study participants seemed to fit mostly in the category of mischievious pranks. Young people who painted obscenities on the water tower or who took an old truck for a joy ride knew that they would get into trouble if they were caught, but they were also aware that a certain amount of latitude prevailed within the community for youthful "high jinks".

In small towns or rural areas, the penalty for minor misdemeanors is typically a call to one's parents and a police escort back home. Venturing into trouble in the city can have more frightening repercussions, as Elvira Taylor discovered:

> My boyfriend and I went in this empty house one day. You know how you just...I mean the door was open and all, and you just want to walk through and see. We didn't take nothing, but we turned the light on and someone must've seen. The police came. They grabbed us and handcuffed us...started reading us our rights and stuff. They thought we were stealing. They finally let us go, but it was real scary.

Next to the use of illegal substances, shoplifting was the crime most frequently engaged in by the case study participants. About half of the young people in the case study group admitted that they had stolen something from a store at one time or another. Most said their shoplifting had been limited to one or two ventures when they were 10 to 15 years old. Though the punishment for youthful shoplifters who were apprehended was typically not severe, some case study participants claimed that getting caught was a major deterrent.

> One time--I'll never forget this cause I'll never do it again--I stole four candy bars from the store. They sat me in jail for eight hours and nobody talked to me the whole entire time. I just sat there. And I've never stolen anything since then. It was really embarrassing.
>
> Yvette McDermott

> One time I got caught stealing cigarettes at the drug store. They called up my parents. My dad gave me a lickin'. I never did that again.
>
> Sven Latoka

> I got caught shoplifting. Oh, God, was I scared! It was my first time doin' it, and it was my last time too. Since it was my first time and I was young, they just called my parents is all. They could see I felt real bad so nobody did too much about it. My grandmom was so disappointed in me--that was the worst part.
>
> Jessica Jackson

Several case study participants had been habitual shoplifters; and while they claimed to have stopped, they also indicated that they didn't think it was that "big a deal". Carmeletta DeVries said, "I never did anything bad--just shoplifting is all." She went on to explain that stealing from a store is much different than stealing from another person, because "stores expect a certain amount of it (stealing), and they can cover it." Adam Sledge, who had been caught stealing a radio from a department store said, "It wasn't nothin' serious--just shopliftin'. But it was my second offense so I got probation." Luanne Clawson, a Boston participant who claimed never to have stolen anything herself, offered the following rather confused but revealing comments on the differences between the criminal acts of "girls" and "boys" and the motivations for juvenile theft.

> The girls don't really steal that much...only if they're out shoplifting, right? That's probably all. But if you hear somebody rob a bank or shoot somebody, you know, that's mostly boys. The girls, you know, shoplift. That's all the girls do, is like shoplift clothes or something. But me, myself, I never did anything like that. I think

> that's bad. Even if you want something really bad, you know. Like Bobby Jones, all right, now if he seen something that he wanted real bad, you know, and he didn't have the money or nothing for it; he has no choice but to take it if he really wants it, right? All right, but now if I was in Bobby's shoes, you know...since he works too and everything...Well, if he just put a little money aside each time, out of each check, then he could save it all up and get whatever he wants. It's wrong to steal something or to hurt somebody. But some people just don't look on it that way.

Youth are much more likely to commit property offenses than violent crimes. While 50 percent of all persons arrested for property offenses each year are 18 or under, teenagers account for only about 25 percent of those arrested for crimes of violence. Bobby Jones, the young man who was used as a negative example by his classmate, Luanne Clawson, was the only case study participant who had been convicted of a violent crime.

Bobby was 16 and a ninth grade dropout when he started getting into trouble in the community. He stole marijuana from apartments in the project to use himself and sell to friends. He says he also used to ride around in stolen cars. Bobby had been out of school and unemployed for six months when he was arrested for unarmed robbery and sexual assault. Along with four other young men, Bobby had stolen some food stamps from a young woman in the project. She was carrying them in her pocket at the time. Bobby claims there was no sexual assault:

> Me and the four other dudes, we messed with the girl--played with her is all. When she called the cops on us, we didn't believe it, you know. Cuz we knew her and everything...We couldn't believe she was really serious.

Following their arrest, Bobby and his friends were kept in juvenile detention for four days. Bobby's sister was asked to post $5,000 bail and appear with him in court. Bobby was put on probation for three years. He says that he had to pay a $125 court fee, which he "earned" through illegal drug sales. Bobby never reported to a probation officer, and he has not heard from the court since his sentencing. Though he was upset at what he felt was unjust treatment, Bobby experienced no serious repercussions from his first brush with the law, and he went on to get in more trouble. The second time he was "caught", the potential punishment was more severe.

> After that I used to ride around in stolen cars sometimes, but I never stole one. You could never get me to go steal one. But I still fool around in 'em a couple of times. But then, you know, somethin' happened. I got to realizin' that if you get caught for that what can happen. I can't see myself in no jail. That time

here in Boston, it was just boring. We played pool, watched TV, eat, got to sleep. It was an experience--that was all. But there was one other time...much worse.

This is while I was in the program, not too long ago. I went to Baltimore for a vacation with a friend of mine. Me and my cousin and his friend, and their two girlfriends, we was riding around in a stolen car. My friend went off to go over to his friend's house. And we got caught. *I* got caught. He didn't.

I had to stay down there. They had a blizzard down there in Baltimore, and we got caught in it. It started snowin' when we first got down there. I was in jail. First I was in their police station--it's like jail, you know. I was in sentry there from Sunday night till Wednesday afternoon. Then we got put into the city jail. My people--my aunt and my grandmother come in Friday and got me out. They could've got me out earlier, but the blizzard...

This jail is ten blocks wide. Like a penitentiary or somethin'. I was in jail with grown men--hoods, faggots, gays, *everything*. You should see it! It was a trip. They had men in there that looked just like women! That experience...after that...That made me realize that I couldn't do no more crime. If anything would've happened to me, they would've had to kill me to do it. I met some dudes from the jail house that got transferred over with me. That was lucky. We was together, and nobody really tried nothin'. But there were dudes in there who were pimping the faggots for five dollars and stuff like that. I was scared when I went over there. Cause it's real big--*real* big. And you don't know *what* could happen to you.

I was lucky really. I got let go. Cause it was a first time. Instead of giving me a sentence, they let me go back to Boston. Plus my aunt got me a good lawyer. I think I was very lucky. The judge told me I could've got five years. They're really strict down there. 'Cept for bein' in jail, nothin' bad happened over it. My people, they didn't tell anybody up here. Anything can happen. But, you know, it was just a *bad* mistake on my part. After that I really realized that I couldn't do nothin' else. Cause the goin' to jail...It was *real* scary.

For Bobby Jones, spending time in a big city jail with adult criminals was a frightening but instructive experience. Whether the experience will act as a permanent deterrent or merely an introduction to criminal life remains to be seen. Each year about 100,000 youth under 18 are placed in adult jails or police lockups. The average length of time a young person is held in jail is six days, but many are held for longer periods awaiting court appearances. A 1976 study by the Children's Defense Fund of the Washington Research Project found that the period of incarceration for youth in many cases was not directly related to the period stipulated by state laws. And, unlike Bobby Jones, many of the young people who are incarcerated each year have committed no criminal offense. Jails, detention homes, and training schools are filled with youth whose only crime has been disobedience or unruliness. In New York State, one survey showed that 43 percent of children in jail were status offenders.

Although state laws differ, status offenses commonly cover some seven categories of behavior: (1) disobedience of "reasonable" orders of parents or custodians; (2) running away from home; (3) truancy; (4) disobedience of the "reasonable" orders of school authorities; (5) acts which are permissible for adults but are offenses when children commit them, such as possessing alcohol or tobacco, or frequenting pool halls or taverns; (6) sexual immorality, sometimes called leading a "lewd and immoral life", or being a "wayward" child; and (7) acting in a manner injurious to oneself or others.

Status offenders are often held by authorities for longer periods than more hardened juvenile offenders, because their parents are more reluctant to take them back home. David Anderson, whose parents had him declared "uncontrollable" because of his frequent fights with younger siblings, spent 43 days in a juvenile detention facility before finally being assigned to a group home. Prolonged confinement does not make status offenders better behaved or less hostile to their parents and society, and there is widespread agreement that some revisions of the antiquated status offender laws is overdue. One school of reform would limit the sanctions that courts can levy on such children, forbidding them to be placed in jails, detention homes, or training schools and focusing on family counseling, probation, and, if necessary, placement in a group home as more appropriate remedies.

Counseling services provided through the juvenile justice system were of considerable benefit to at least one of the young offenders in the case study group. Shunted back and forth between her parents, foster homes, and friends, Sandy Bonds went through years of getting into trouble and being hauled into jail before she finally got the kind of intensive counseling that could help her to achieve perspective on her problems and develop self-respect.

> I was busted for selling acid, selling pot, selling... oh, pills and things...for drinking too. When I lived in New Mexico, the drinking age was 21. I drank constantly, and I was always getting busted for that. Seemed like every weekend I would get busted and hauled

> off to jail. Then I'd go before a judge, and he'd spank my hands and say, "Don't do that anymore."
>
> I also had problems at school. I started a couple of riots actually. There was this little group, this gang in school, I used to run around with. And we'd pick on certain people we knew couldn't do anything to us. It got to where it would be thirty people in one group and another thirty people, and we'd just start fighting each other outside during lunch or something. Everybody would harrass each other, just be real mean. There was some police patrols brought in for a couple days. They tried to find out who the problem kids were in the groups and kind of zero in and talk to them. I heard if they got your name, you would get kicked out of school, and you'd become the custody of the court and all this stuff.
>
> But it wasn't like that at all. I got put on probation, and all. I got this really good P.O. officer, Susan Fisher, that I told you about before. I had to go to a treatment facility. The whole time I went there I was in a kind of psycho-therapy thing. I had a couple different psychiatrists talk to me. They had established me as "emotionally unstable". It was kind of strange with them, but my P.O. officer was the best. Everybody told me I was better than what I had been. That's the main thing. I got pumped into my head, "you're not a bad kid," and "show yourself what you can do."
>
> At the time I didn't understand, but it made me realize a lot of things. It, uh, I'm just glad they did it. Because if they hadn't, I wouldn't of been able to sit here and talk to you. I wouldn't be working. I've got more self-respect now, and you need to have that to do anything. I mean, how can you make a decision about yourself if you don't know yourself and you don't respect yourself? How can you make a good decision for yourself? It's almost impossible. You've got to know something about yourself before you can make any good decisions.

Other case study participants were less fortunate than Sandy in their dealings with the legal system. Several young people who were involved in only minor infractions were treated with hostility and suspicion by law enforcement authorities. Jessica Jackson reported two encounters with the law. One had occurred several years earlier after she ran away to California with a girlfriend. The other, more recent, incident involved a violation for impeding traffic when the muffler fell off her car. In both encounters, Jessica felt the attitude of the authorities who were involved were unfairly condemning.

> After I ran away with my girlfriend, I was put on probation. I'd never done anything bad before, and I was real sorry. But Mr. Casey, my probation officer...I hated that man with a passion! He said that I was too mature for my age. He said that I was too developed. So he made me go to Jackson Park and get pregnancy tests all the time. I didn't even have a boyfriend. But he wouldn't let me stay with my mother on weekends. He'd take me out to the case worker's house and make me stay there. A couple times she made me babysit her little boy while she went out drinking. One time her husband came home, and they got into a fight. I had to sit there and watch this. Finally my grandmother went in and told Mr. Casey off, and after that he left me alone.
>
> This is a small town, and I know most of the cops on the force. They're good guys, and I have nothing against them...except for John O'Reilly, the guy who gave me the ticket a few weeks ago. I don't think he treated me fairly. He turned on his lights and his siren and pulled me over. I didn't drop my muffler on purpose, you know, but I couldn't get two words in to explain. He came over to my door and said (gruffly): "Get into my police car." I felt like--the way he talked to me--I felt like I was the cop trying to be reasonable with him, and he was the teenager. He took my driver's license and just threw it in my lap. I said, "You have my insurance form there." And he said, "Shut up, young lady, I'm not done with it yet." I'm not some smart aleck teenager! I have total respect for my elders. If they treat me like dirt, I won't say nothing to them. I told this detective on the force all about what happened. He said, "Plead not guilty, tell the judge what happened and also tell him how the officer treated you." And he's darn right I'm going to, because I don't feel I'm a trouble-making teenager, and I don't want to be treated like one!

While some young people seem to engage in illegal activities sporadically, without much forethought or understanding of their own behavior and its effects on the community, other youth plan criminal acts with deliberation and may feel ethically justified in committing them. Douglas Giscard began a two year burglary career by robbing donation boxes in Catholic churches. Given his history of conflict with strait-laced parents and parochial school officials, it seemed to him like poetic justice.

> It was an easy way to make money, and I really felt justified in doing it. We used to pick out a church almost every weekend. They had little poor boxes, and they'd put bills through the little slots. We'd go in the back and put our combs down there, catch the bills in the teeth

> and pull 'em up. There were always wealthy people that went to the churches, and they would put twenties and stuff in there every so often.

Douglas was living on his own when he began burglarizing houses. He had no job and no ties with parents, school, or conventional, organized activities. Douglas is an intelligent, methodical, and not particularly aggressive young man. He says that he never wanted to hurt anyone; he needed money and burglary seemed a logical and not too risky way to go about getting it. He learned the techniques of a burglar in much the same way that young people learn more conventional skills:

> How did I figure it out? Well, I watched people. I knew it was going on, you know, ever since I was a child. Our house had been burglarized and I was real curious at the time. I learned a few tricks from older friends on how to do it the fastest and easiest ways. There's really no stopping burglars once they know what they're doing. It's hard to catch 'em.

Douglas' burglary career came to an abrupt halt when he was arrested. He says, "I was handled reasonably and fairly by the police. I was caught red-handed in the process. I was guilty." After being held for four days in jail, Douglas had a preliminary hearing in juvenile court at which he pled guilty. He was released in his own custody and later placed on probation. Douglas knows he got off "easy" because he had no previous arrests. He was nearly 18 years old and could have been remanded to adult court, where the penalty would likely have been much stiffer.

Fortunately, the caseworker assigned to Douglas by the court realized that he needed a job which would offer him a challenge and the opportunity to participate in the community in a positive way. Through a referral to the YETP program, Douglas was hired by a non-profit agency providing emergency services for runaways and other youth living away from their parents. Douglas easily established rapport with the agency's staff and clients, and he was able to channel the energy that he had previously expended in illegal ventures into work that benefitted himself and the community.

Alcohol and Drugs

The use of alcohol and other drugs for social occasions, recreation, and relief of tension or boredom is a feature of modern life that permeates nearly all segments of the community. The line between use and abuse of such substances is a narrow one. Unless the law or community standards of behavior are flagrantly violated, the consumption of alcohol, prescription drugs, and other mood altering substances is considered to be a matter of private choice by most adults. While accepting alcohol and drug use by adults, we try to protect young people from the potential harmful effects of consumption by restricting the sale of alcohol to minors and levying penalties against those caught with marijuana or other illegal substances. But the use of alcohol and marijuana is widespread among young people and appears to be on the increase.

Experimentation with alcohol has long been a rite of passage for adolescents. But today's teenagers seem to be starting younger and drinking harder. Teenage "problem drinkers" are now thought to number about one million--at least double the number of five years ago. An estimated one in twenty teenagers has a serious drinking problem. Reliable statistics on the consumption of marijuana and other illegal drugs by young people are not available, but examples of 12 and 13 year olds who are regular users are reported frequently in the media. With less supervision, more mobility, and greater exposure to adult pressures and problems, young people have increased opportunities and incentives to experiment with alcohol and other drugs. Though some seem to weather such experimentation with no lasting harmful effects, others develop an early and debilitating dependence.

Among high school age youth, as in the adult community, there is a wide range of behavior and attitudes concerning the use of intoxicating substances. Within the case study group, alcohol was by far the most commonly used drug. Only two participants described themselves as total abstainers, and three-fourths of the 32 participants said they drank at least on social occasions. While alcohol was the drug most acceptable and readily available to the case study participants, marijuana was also available; and its use was not uncommon, even among participants from small towns and rural areas. Twenty of the case study participants have tried marijuana at least once, and about one-third said that they currently smoked it on an occasional or regular basis.

The regular use of other drugs like amphetamines, barbiturates, and cocaine was comparatively rare among the case study group. About half the participants reported having gone through a phase of drug experimentation, but most limited their experimenting to marijuana. Psychedelic drugs, like LSD and peyote, were uncommon. Most participants associated psychedelics with "older people from back in the 60's." Alcohol is the drug of choice among the minority of case study participants who consider themselves heavy users. Heavier users in the case study group seemed more interested in blunting their sensibilities or insulating themselves from outside pressure than they were in "tripping". Only one participant had used heroin.

Case study participants are divided in their views about whether teenage drinking and drug use constitute a serious problem in the community. Abstainers and moderate users believe that excessive alcohol consumption is a problem for only a minority of young people. Several participants see excessive drinking and "pot" smoking as a natural phase that most people outgrow in time. While many admit that it gets out of hand on occasion, most feel that the decision to drink or smoke should be left up to each individual. They believe that abusers are only hurting themselves and that, in any case, little can be done to curb excessive use.

> Well, I don't know how bad drinking is. I mean as long as they do it at home...as long as they stay away from me, they can get plastered out of their mind. I could care less. They're not hurting anybody but theirselves. And with the pot thing...I don't smoke it; I think it's really bad. I don't relish the idea of going up to the balcony in the movies and being choked with the smoke, you know. But people will be people.
>
> Linda Larsen

> From what I've seen, there's some talk about drugs, but the use is not that great. Drinking is more popular, but it's not really a problem for most people--just some kids, you can tell they have to have it all the time.
>
> Joy Tippets

> The people I know just usually drink on special occasions--weekends, usually. I don't know too many people who drink it every day. Just mainly on weekends. Friday, Saturday night, people go to a movie or somewhere else and drink. I could care less for drugs. I've tooken some before, when I was younger. I'm not afraid to admit that. Smoked pot...it's not so hot, but how can it harm you? Pills, you know, that's a different story...
>
> Sven Latoka

> It seems like everybody tries drinking and pot. But I don't think they're really hurting anybody--except maybe themselves. Like a lot of my friends...like about ninth, tenth grade, everyone was drinking. Everyone came to school at least once bombed out of their mind...took tests and things that way. Everybody got considerably lower grades. We all did it; I did it too. Now, we're out of it. I think it's just a phase. Like my little sister wants to drink now, and she smokes once in a while.
>
> Tina Middleton

A number of the case study participants do believe that alcoholism and drug dependency are serious problems, but they don't think that this abuse is primarily centered in the youthful segment of the community. As one young woman said, "In my neighborhood, it's not mostly kids--a lot of grown people drink. There's a lot of speeding around, people hollering at night and just carrying on." In the broad sense, young people have inherited rather than created the problem of drug abuse. Most of the case study participants had observed adults in the community who had turned to alcohol and drugs when they despaired of other means of solving their problems. Those who had witnessed the debilitating effects of alcohol or drug abuse on their parents or older friends were usually sobered by this experience, and they maintained that it affected their own patterns of use.

> I like to drink sometimes, but I don't like to get high all that much. Alcohol played a big role in my family life. I don't know if my dad is an alcoholic, but he's the kind of person, well, the kind of person that when he drinks, he drinks to get drunk. When I was younger, he drank a lot. When he was real uptight about something, he'd come home drunk, get real loud, pick fights, and stuff like that. That's one of the reasons we don't get along today. I don't like to be around him when he's drinking. My own attitude is that I said to myself when I was younger, if I ever got that way, I'd just quit. I'd never get that way!
>
> Todd Clinton

> My dad's an alcoholic, I've grown up with the situation, and I know what it can do. He's been in the hospital quite a few times. And my boyfriend, Bill, he used to be a heavy drinker. Most of my friends, they're not really alcoholics, but every weekend they've got to have their booze. Seeing my dad, it turned me against it. I drink once in a while, but I don't like beer and I don't like hard, hard liquor. I like sloe gin, that's my style. And that's it!
>
> Lori Wozisky

> I don't think you should use it to get away from some problem you may have. I got a friend, Harry, who's older than me, and he's got two kids. Harry and his wife got along pretty good before he started drinkin' heavy. I told him he should watch what he was doin' and stuff. But now he's in the hospital, tryin' to straighten himself out. Him and his wife are getting a divorce, and she's takin' the kids away.
>
> Mark Gurney

> A lot of the older people out this way, the adults, they smoke a lot of marijuana. And I can see its effect. They forget a lot. They just lay around, and after while they get real fat. Cause it makes 'em eat. A lot of people are smokin' it all the time. They just get lazy. They lay around and don't get any exercise...don't care about nothin' too much. That's not for me. I keep my body in good shape so I can play ball, you know.
>
> Bobby Jones

Within the public housing projects and low income neighborhoods of large cities, a wide variety of drugs are available and heavy drug use is not uncommon. The study participants from urban areas, particularly those from Boston, exhibited a familiarity with the distribution patterns, use, and potential effects of different kinds of narcotics. Some used marijuana, themselves, and saw nothing really harmful in this habit. Others couldn't see much point in smoking "weed". But all drew a sharp distinction between the use of mild narcotics like marijuana and the effects of stronger, addictive substances like heroin.

> The worst thing is people dealing. That's the real problem. Heroin, coke, pills, and everything else...Some people my age is already using it. That ain't doin' 'em no good. Smoking is different though. There's a big difference. Everybody does it out here. They know how to smoke weed and, you know, they still work, and they still get along. But taking dope now...all those folks do is steal. They don't work. They just want to be stealing.
>
> Genetta Burke

> One thing about shooting up, once you get hooked on it, you'd do anything for it. You'd kill if you have to, if you're in the bad of a situation. People go really far for some dope. But marijuana, it's just like a lazy high. It'll get you lazy and get you feeling funny, but you won't want to do too much. But with dope, you get to feeling bad. Afterwhile you get to the point where you have to get you some money, you know, to get you some more. Those people would do anything for money--hold up, stick up, jump, rob, shoot, kill--anything!
>
> Bobby Jones

> When I first moved up to Boston, I knew what herb was. I was smoking a little bit. But when I got here everybody was doing it...way more up here than it is down

> south. Still, between smoking and shooting up is a way big difference. You can get addicted to heroin, but you can't get addicted to marijuana. I don't see no harm in it. It helps me...it helps me out a little bit.
>
> Harold Thomas

> I know this lady, she just died from an overdose of heroin, and there's a couple around who are snorting coke. I think that some drugs are worse than others. I don't mess with drugs so I don't know what I'm sitting over here saying for...Maybe just a couple times that I ever bothered, you know, to take a pill or something. But usually I just drink a beer and smoke a joint or something like that. There's nothing wrong with that really.
>
> Carmeletta DeVries

> Heroin or anything like that, I wouldn't, you know, I wouldn't go that far. You know, I grew up with some dudes out here, and they just went off, you know, into that. So I'm by myself now. That's just not what I want to get into. If you're smoking marijuana, you may just smoke it once in a while. But if you messing with heroin, you're going to start getting sick, and you're going to start needing it. You mess with heroin, you're on the way out!
>
> Adam Sledge

In the public housing projects and ghetto neighborhoods of Boston, heroin is viewed as the enemy. Most residents deplore the crime, decay and debilitation it spawns, and some campaign actively against substance abuse of all sorts. In the hallways of housing projects and community centers hang large posters of the Reverend Jesse Jackson, with the words: "We can march to freedom, walk to freedom, and even crawl to freedom. But we cannot stagger our way to freedom." Several of the case study participants who live in ghetto projects are opposed to reliance on any sort of drug and believe that the use of heavily addictive narcotics is going out of style, particularly among the young.

> Some people around my way still smoke weed, but that's all. They don't shoot up or nothing like that no more. But me and my friends don't smoke no more, cause, you know, why waste our time? It ain't nothing but being high a little while. Then it just wears off. You spent your money and you ain't got nothing.
>
> Bobby Jones

> Not none of my friends would use heroin. That's one thing about the people I deal with. You couldn't pay none..like dope between teenagers now in the area--you couldn't pay them to touch it. You know, shootin' up, that used to be a real major thing a while ago around here. But it ain't the thing no more.
>
> Felisa Santana

> I've seen it go on in front of my face, and I dont like it. I know a lot of names, but, you know, when starts coming over to my family and friends, something's got to be done. I be trying to do something now. I work over here in the project for the security force, you know. We try to tell people what's happenin'. That's not the way to be doing things out here. Cuz if they're going down, they take me with 'em.
>
> Adam Sledge

What about the young people who do become addicted or who are trapped in alcohol dependency? Within the study group, there were three participants for whom drinking or drug use was more than just a social ritual or somebody else's problem. Though their family lives were troubled, these three participants did not come from urban ghettos. All three are white and each is female. Why did they turn to alcohol or drugs? How did they become dependent, and what effects did their dependency have on their lives?

Jean Ansel believes that she started taking barbiturates when she was 12 primarily to get attention from her parents. The "downers" didn't get Jean the attention or affection she craved, but they did make her high and help her to forget her troubles. Within two years, Jean had "graduated" to heroin, which was even more effective in obliterating her feelings of pain and inadequacy.

> I liked taking downers because of the high. And then I started realizing that when I took 'em, I wasn't ever having to face my problems. I didn't really have to face life at all. I kept taking them for that reason. Then I knew this girl, Penny, who was a junkie. She was a few years older than me. She told me about heroin--that it was a whole new life. I tried it, and I realized that it was a much better life. It didn't take me long to get hooked. Penny lived with her father, and she was able to write checks on his account. I would come up with about one-fourth of what it cost, and she'd pay the rest. Sometimes we stole money from people's purses and stuff. I didn't like that part. But I liked being high. I

> liked it because I could stand up and look at everything and everyone and just not care at all. It didn't bother me one bit what happened! I was free. Nothing bothered me. When I didn't get it, I was really bad...bitchy and all. Like if I was starting to hurt for it, I'd start, you know, going nuts. But when I was on it...you couldn't hardly beat this person!

Though withdrawal was painful, Jean was able to beat heroin dependency and live a drug free life during her seven months in a foster home. But when she moved back to her father's house, she found she still needed a crutch. This time it was alcohol:

> I started drinking heavy when I moved back with my dad. I didn't want to get back into drugs, and he and his girlfriend drank a lot so it seemed okay. From then on, even after I left there, I just kept drinking. I was staying away from drugs, you know. I kept thinking that drinking was okay, but drugs wasn't. But then I had that drinking problem. It took me a long time to realize I was addicted to alcohol. I finally went to a treatment center. That helped some. My job and school have helped a lot; I mean my life is a lot better and everything. But the only real treatment for it, as far as I can see, is just to stay away from it altogether. Cause if I drink now, I still want to get drunk.

Jean substituted alcoholism for an early drug addiction. She fell into a pattern of heavy drinking without realizing that alcohol could be addictive. Another participant, Peggy Bromfield, also slipped into alcohol dependency with little understanding of the potential for addiction. Peggy started drinking to fight loneliness and ease the strain of launching a social life after her divorce at age 17. She had little previous experience with drugs or alcohol. She was drinking regularly for over six months before she realized that she had a problem.

> Since last December I've been enjoying life more. But until then, From February to September, I was an alcoholic, and I don't remember where the time went, really. It was like I had a constant hangover, and I was in a bad mood all the time. When I left my husband, it was like an, um, immature person just comin' out into the world. You know, it's really kinda hard to get used to being single and going out with other guys. That was the hardest part--tryin' to figure out which ones were weird and which weren't. You don't even realize when you get into it, you know. You just have a craving for people and attention, and you, um, you know, have people come over and party constantly. You get to know people like that, and like I couldn't leave the kids; so you

> tell them to come over and bring their friends over. Everybody's always drinkin' so you drink too. There were people here day and night, and I was drinkin' day and night. Nobody knew it but me, cause there were always different people. I'd drink at least a bottle or two of wine every day, you know, and it just never phased me. People would talk about alcoholics and how they get like that, and I finally realized that I could be one. I got to where I couldn't get up in the mornings, and nobody knew what I was drinkin' but me.
>
> I finally decided that I needed to get away from the whole scene, to think about it and what it was doin' to my kids. I went with my grandparents to the beach for a week. They didn't know how I'd been drinking. By the second day, I was real shaky, you know, and I wanted to drink real bad. I drank a lot of tea and that helped. At the end of the week, I felt a lot better. I knew I couldn't go back to drinking like I had been. I've only drunk once or twice since then. Now what I do is smoke a couple hits of hash, and I'm just out. That's not the best thing, I realize, but at least smokin' something that good keeps me from drinking!

The practice of alternating between alcohol and other drugs, or substituting one kind of dependency for another, believed to be less harmful, is a common pattern. For many young people, like Sandy Bonds, who have experimented widely with drugs, alcohol proves to be the most addictive. Unfortunately, it is also the most readily available and socially acceptable alternative for the very young. Sandy Bonds took her first drink when she was 11 years old. Her mother, who never drank much, kept a bottle of vodka in the kitchen, and Sandy decided to try some. "I took a swig of it and about gagged myself to death," Sandy laughs. "So then I decided to put a little orange juice in it and it wasn't half bad." Sandy had friends who experimented with drugs and alcohol. She herself sold drugs and tried many different kinds. But she returned to drinking, and she acknowledges that it has been a serious problem for her.

> Drugs were a way of hustling, of making money. And they were sort of experimental. I would try this and try that just to see what would happen--just to see how I felt. And because I felt so bad then, I would take 'em to make myself feel better. I tried almost everything you could think of, except heroin. I never shot up.
>
> But alcohol was the main thing. Cause it's legal. I mean grown-ups were drinkin' and everything, so it seemed like it would be okay. But it's not. I don't care what anybody says. It's not. When you want to

> drink to escape or when you drink and you're an alcoholic, it's not okay. I don't even understand why they even got it legal--except for the fact the government makes so much money off it.
>
> Alcohol is kind of a "get-away" type thing. Everybody says that alcohol is something just to ease the mind, relax, or just a social thing. That's not what it is. Alcohol is a real escape for a lot of people, cause it works. It's a depressant, but it sort of...sort of... almost turns into an upper when, when you're depressed and you drink it. I don't know how that works. Umm... I kind of wish they never even had the stuff around. But I do like it. I still like it, and I still drink it. I don't drink to where it's going to hurt me anymore. Umm...that's what I learned from drinking. I mean, I know when it's going to hurt me, and when it's not. So I can regulate myself on that. Mostly I don't drink at all. And when I drink, I know that I'm drinking to get drunk.

Welfare Dependency

In earlier times, when communities were more isolated from one another and tended to function more self-sufficiently, most adults were easily identified in their towns and neighborhoods by their occupational function. Those who were unable to maintain stable employment or to play productive roles in the community were usually at the bottom of the social scale. In the suburbs and cities of modern America, many people have no idea what their nearest neighbors "do for a living", but the social and economic status of most people is still affected by the employment status of the household head. In community institutions, like schools and churches, the "haves" and the "have nots" are easily identified. Being a welfare recipient typically means having low status in the community. It connotes poverty and the lack of occupational function. Welfare recipiency is viewed by some as evidence of personal failure and an unhealthy dependency on the community at large.

Most of the case study participants had experienced some sort of dependency on welfare or other income support programs. Most of these participants came from households where reliance on AFDC or social security payments had extended over a number of years, but some had been only short term recipients. Nine of the case study participants had applied for and received some form of income support either as individuals or as heads of their own households. Only eight of the 32 participants had no personal experience with income subsidization programs, apart from their participation in youth employment programs. How do young people from welfare dependent households view their role in the community? Is there any stigma associated with welfare recipiency among the young?

Within the case study group, most non-recipients admitted that they knew little about the welfare system. Some associated welfare recipiency with negative character traits. They had heard parents, teachers, or other adults speak of "people who take advantage", "people who stay on the dole all their lives", and "people who could work if they weren't so lazy." Most non-recipients had uncomplimentary views of welfare users, but some were hesitant to judge recipients harshly. "It's not a good thing to get on it," one young woman said. "But you never know what their situation may be so you shouldn't point a finger."

While the majority of participants, both from recipient and non-recipient households, said they could not see themselves being dependent on welfare payments as adults, a number of young people in the case study group felt that income support programs had been important to them, or their families, as a temporary lift on the road to economic self-sufficiency. Participants in this group did not make sharp distinctions between use of welfare and the use of other community services. Like food stamps, planned parenthood services, and community health clinics; welfare and other forms of income support were viewed as resources to be tapped in time of need. Among those with such views were the two Indo-Chinese refugees and several case study participants who received temporary independent living subsidies from the State of Oregon.

> The U.S. Government give for the refugee the program they call IRAP. Say some of us cannot find work or go to school, they will give help. The help last about two years for some, I believe. My father did not need, but my brother must use, and it help him very much. He was able to finish school and find a better job.
>
> Lui Heuyen

> The Independent Living Subsidy Program is a program sponsored and set up by the city. They provide a juvenile, when he's in a position that he can't really hack it on his own right now, they give him about three hundred and ten dollars a month to, uh, pay for an apartment, bills, food, and other stuff. It's set up so you work, and whatever you make is subtracted and they pay the difference. They help you make a budget and all. Well, I was on it for about four months until I was able to leave it and stand on my own two feet. It was a stepping stone on the way up. A very helpful procedure for me.
>
> Douglas Giscard

> I'd probably apply for it (welfare) if I really needed to. If I couldn't find a job for a long time, or I get fired and couldn't get another...wasn't able to pay the rent and stuff. I'd probably accept it. But all the time, I'd be working to get off it, you know. That's what my mother did.
>
> Jack Thrush

Some of the case study participants who lived in AFDC households felt socially stigmatized by welfare reliance. They believed that others in the community looked down on them for being welfare recipients. Richard Nielsen, whose widowed mother raised him on AFDC as a strict Seventh Day Adventist, said:

> When a person's on it, and they're going to a very conservative church, then they tend to get frowned on. But I feel that if it's necessary to be on it, well, then there shouldn't be that kind of flack from the...others... the peers.

Welfare mothers who came from middle income households seemed to feel the social stigma of dependency most sharply, and the administrative hassles of dealing with the welfare office added to their discomfort. Peggy Bromfield first got on the welfare roles when she was pregnant and her husband was unemployed. Her dependency continued after she was divorced:

> I always thought my husband lost his job purposely so that welfare would pay for the pregnancy and the hospital bills. And I guess that's a smart investment, but I think it's a cop-out. If I have another baby, I'll pay for it myself.
>
> Socially, there's a lot of negative things about bein' on welfare. The people in the welfare office look down on you, you know, when they probably just barely got out high school and were lucky enough to get a job. They look down upon you and they show it. And that hurts. It's degrading.
>
> I don't like to tell people I'm on it, because I think they'll look down on me. But I'm pretty honest, so I do. When someone asks me where I'm coming from, I have to say, "Welfare. I wish I could lie...I'd tell you a good lie, but I'm not into lying, so now you know the truth."

The young heads of household who have to deal with the welfare office are united in their complaints about the inefficiencies, inequities, and absurdities of the welfare system. Patty Monson talked about the lack of coordination and frequent changes in procedure. Last winter when she needed emergency help with utility bills, she was sent to ten different places before she found someone who could assist her. Most young mothers say they have to take time away from YEDPA jobs and household responsibilities when they are asked to report to the welfare office for minor issues. One young woman said, "Any trip to the welfare office for anything means at least a two to four hour wait."

Some welfare recipients are assigned caseworkers who are able to expedite procedures, but not all caseworkers are so accommodating. A young mother from Boston had the following to say about her AFDC caseworker:

> The one I got now, she gives me trouble all the time. All kinds of trouble. I mean, she don't wanna give me nothin'. And she thinks that...I don't know what she thinks. She just troubles me for nothin'. I won't be doin' nothin' to her, and someday she'll just call me up, and tell me I got to come down there. And when I get down there, she won't be there or somethin' like that. I pack up and get all ready for trouble, and then...nothing!

Case study participants who had watched their parents or other relatives struggle to support a family on welfare payments had a number of complaints about the system:

> It's no good livin' on welfare. You don't get too much. They say if you're on welfare, you not supposed to have a job. How they think you gonna get by? If people do find a job--which is most likely--then they cut you down. Only give you so much. I think people should be allowed to get their welfare check and work too. Everything's goin' up. People havin' like four or five kids, they may get somethin' like two hundred, three hundred dollars. They have to buy more.
>
> Bobby Jones

> Sometimes the family can't wait the two weeks to get the check. They can't make it between checks. I think that's too long to be waitin'. And some mothers don't do right. They use it for other things. It's just given to them, you know, not to the kids.
>
> Adam Sledge

> Sometimes, for some weird reason, they'll cut the amount my mom gets. And now they don't pay her anything for me, and that's kind of hard. Sometimes I have to loan her money out of my CETA paycheck. I think that's wrong. I

> could see them cutting the amount if I'd moved away from home, but I'm still living at home and haven't graduated from high school yet. I'm still going to school, and, you know, there's no place else for me to be. I just don't understand that.
>
> Tina Middleton

While I had anticipated that case study participants from welfare dependent households might have negative views of the welfare system, I was surprised to find that many had negative views of welfare clients as well. A number of participants from welfare families associated recipiency with laziness, and they felt that the system discouraged active participation in the labor force.

> I wouldn't like to be on it when I'm on my own, cause to me it's just a waste of time. I mean, they're just getting lazy from staying home. Some people take it just to stay home and be lazy. They don't have to be getting on it. Other people need it, and they won't give it to them.
>
> Felisa Santana

> The way it seems to me, I just want to do something for myself. I don't want nobody to give me too much of anything. I guess some people say they like welfare, and some people don't. To me, I don't think it's no good at all. Cause it keeps people from learning to do something that they want to do or need to get into. They just get lazy and just sit around and get free things. That shouldn't be. They should be out trying to do something on their own.
>
> Adam Sledge

> I don't like it. I mean, everybody should be getting a job. Welfare needs to go away anyway and everybody needs to get a job. I don't really think welfare is going to be here too long. And while people are just sitting here at home doing nothing, it's just going to disappear slowly. It's going to end up being more difficult for them to get a job.
>
> Harold Thomas

Luanne Clawson, who had been raised by her mother on AFDC, maintained that she, herself, would never apply for welfare because "it's better to work, and they don't give you that much to bother with anyway." She felt that the entire situation was largely the fault of the fathers who fail to support their children:

> For some people that has a lot of kids, I know it's really hard on them. So many kids won't get out there and try to find 'em a job. But, you know, it's really the father's department. Cause he should...he shouldn't go around giving people babies if he's not going to see about 'em. That's why people have to get on welfare. It's the fathers; they just up and leave you and don't give the kids no support or nothing. I think that's wrong. My mother's on welfare, and me and my older sisters, we help her out. She's doin' better, cause she only has one kid more to take care of. That's my little sister that's nine. The rest of us, you know, we're on our own. We know what's happening out here.

The small size of welfare grants in comparison to actual living expenses, and the administrative barriers that one must navigate to receive support, provide both the incentive and the rationale for welfare "chisling". During the research period, I heard a number of stories about women who worked and augmented their welfare grants with unreported earnings in order to support themselves and their children. I met only one participant who was willing to confirm this practice and discuss her own experience as a welfare "cheater".

Genetta Burke has received AFDC payments since the first of her two children was born over four years ago. Genetta says she could never support her family on the AFDC checks alone; and though she doesn't like to cheat, she feels justified in not reporting her full income. During the past three years, she has worked briefly as a receptionist and put in three short stints as a factory worker. The income that she earned from these jobs was not reported to the welfare office. During the research period, Genetta was getting a $152 AFDC grant every two weeks. She was also bringing home about $75 each week from her YCCIP job. This income had been the source of some conflict with the welfare office:

> Oh, they was gonna cut me off they said. Because I was in this, this training program. They was checkin' people's...you know, they had that computer checkin' up on people? Yeah, well, my social worker, she tried to interview me about it. But we got a waiver or something. Cause Henry, you know, my supervisor? He called and got me a legal aid lawyer. And after I told her that I had a lawyer, she just dropped it.

Genetta's grandmother lives with her, and she contributes about $150 each month for household expenses. Genetta's boyfriend, who no longer lives with her, but is the father of her children, also gives her money each week.

She says, "He's pretty good about that. He pays for my daughter to go to nursery school, $25 a week. He pays for that and gives me a little money extra for food and stuff like that."

When income and contributions from all sources are totaled, Genetta receives an average of about $800 per month to cover expenses for a family of four. This puts the Burke household well above the poverty guidelines set by OMB, but still within the lower income category. Though she has no trouble handling basic expenses, like rent, which is $175 a month, or heating oil, which shot up to about $90 a month last winter; after food, clothing, transportation, and other household necessities are purchased, Genetta says there is usually no money left. Genetta feels that she is just trying to do the best she can for her children. And while she acknowledges that she "makes out pretty well compared to lots of people around here", Genetta would like to be more self-sufficient:

> I'd like to get off welfare. I like workin'. I'll probably always work. But for now...I mean, just to make what I need...I'm not even doin' that good...but without welfare, I'd need to make at least $5 an hour. I don't think right now I could get a job that paid that much.

Genetta's situation, though understandable, is not typical of the AFDC recipients within the case study group. Most welfare families seem to get by on much smaller incomes, and most recipients are too afraid of losing benefits to risk not reporting earned income. Occasional abuse notwithstanding, nobody in the case study group appeared to be getting rich, or even living particularly well from welfare. Carmeletta DeVries lives with her sister, who is also a welfare recipient. Carmeletta gets only a $108 AFDC allotment each month to cover expenses for herself and her infant son. After she lost her YETP job, this was the only income Carmeletta was receiving. Patty Monson had to meet living expenses for herself and her year old child with $280 monthly allotment. In addition, she was allowed to keep $100 of her monthly YETP earnings; but since she received no money from welfare for child care, this entire amount went for babysitting costs.

Given the nature of the welfare system, the attitudes toward welfare dependency that prevail within most communities, it is not surprising that most of the case study participants would much rather work than collect welfare. If anything, those with first hand experience as recipients are even more eager than non-recipients to avoid welfare dependency in later life. But for many, particularly for single mothers with small children, welfare dependency is a difficult trap to escape. The low paying, dead-end jobs available to unskilled young people do not really offer a viable alternative to welfare. How many will be able to gain the skills and job experience that will enable them to achieve economic self-sufficiency and escape welfare subsidization remains to be seen. But there is little doubt that most would like very much to do just that.

IV. SCHOOL LIFE

> My education is real important to me. Also to my parents. They kind of got it into my head how important an education is. My dad only went through eighth grade, but now he's taking night school. You really need a high school eduation to know things and to get ahead in the world. Kids who quit school...they can't get good jobs. They end up drinking or in jail...I like going to school. I'm glad I don't live in some other country where you go to the sixth grade and that's it!
>
> Lori Wozisky

Faith in the wonder working powers of education has proved to be one of the most durable tenets of democratic ideology. The maintenance of a public school system that provides universal education to the nation's youth is considered an intrinsic component of our society. While there are conflicts about how the system should operate, the concept of free and mandatory schooling for the young is supported widely and is a point of concensus among otherwise divergent groups. American families, like the Woziskys, believe that the education afforded by the public school system is the key to a viable and successful life for their children.

Schools bear the responsibility of teaching young people basic skills--reading, writing, and arithmetic. But their function extends beyond rudimentary academic instruction; they are supposed to prepare young people for life. Public schools are expected to provide the knowledge, discipline, and vocational training that will enable young graduates to successfully enter the job market. They are also expected to play a major role in the socialization of the young, to provide them with the values, experience, and social skills that enable them to make a positive adjustment to adult life. After the family, the school is the first social institution a child must deal with--the place in which he learns to handle himself with strangers. School life establishes the pattern of subsequent assumptions about which relations between an individual and society are appropriate and which constitute unacceptable invasions. In school, young people begin to discover where they stand in relationship to their peers.

Historical Mandates for Education

Today, the idea of free and universal public schooling seems commonplace; in the early nineteenth century, the concept was revolutionary to its advocates and opponents alike. Although schooling before that time had been fairly widespread, it was limited in scope. Boys were far more likely than girls to be sent to school. Most spent less time in school over the course of a year than children do now, and most left school as soon as they learned to read, write, and cipher. Schooling was chiefly a way of providing access to the scriptures, the laws of the land, or the skills of a trade. The major responsibility for education fell on parents, with school playing a distinctive secondary role.

With the creation of the public "common school" system in the mid-nineteenth century, formal education began to replace family education rather than to merely assist it. Compulsory and free schooling was given many justifications; among the most widely accepted was the argument that families--particularly immigrant families--could not adequately educate their children for productive roles in the growing and increasingly complex American economy. It was proposed that schools should do what families were failing or unable to do; pass on needed skills, teach good work habits, and form character--in short, to Americanize.

To a large extent, the philosophy of Americanization was linked to the idealistic objective that schools would become the major vehicle for equalizing opportunity in future generations. Horace Mann, the most influential and articulate advocate of egalitarian education, saw a direct connection between universal public education and the elimination of economic inequality. Mann believed that education "prevents poverty" and envisioned school as "the great equalizer of all conditions of men...the balance wheel of the social machinery." Educational egalitarians believed that if schools could be made free, cumpulsory, and universal, they would serve to equalize the conditions from which all children started the race of life.

While nineteenth century reformers appealed to the belief that schools under responsible professional leadership would facilitate social mobility and the eventual eradication of poverty, others favored such a system for its potential to stabilize society and control the negative effects of divergent cultures. Under favorable conditions, the school system's emphasis on Americanization and its promotion of universal norms had a liberating effect which helped individuals to make a break from narrow and limiting traditions and to connect with broader opportunities. But the democratic aim of bringing the fruits of modern culture to the masses resulted in a system which to some extent used education as a form of social control. School contributed simultaneously to social mobility and social stratification. It helped to advance those who adopted the values and patterns of behavior endorsed by certain segments of society while discouraging those who failed to adapt from developing ambitions incommensurate with their station and prospects.

Under the Americanization model, education was intended to serve as both a political and economic initiation for young people. Nineteenth century schools attempted to inculcate industrial discipline in the broadest sense of the word. As evident in the writings of Thorstein Veblen, the same habits of mind that were associated with the making of good citizens--self-reliance, self-respect, versatility--were thought to be essential to good workmanship. By developing these characteristics, accompanied by a scientific and materialistic outlook and a commitment to quality workmanship, the education system attempted to provide an efficient labor force for the industrializing economy.

As the nineteenth century progressed, technological advances associated with industrialization increased the demand for skilled and manually proficient workers. By the turn of the century, the education system was under pressure to play an expanded and more specialized role in the preparation of young people for the labor force. Manual training and vocational education were made available in the public schools. The non-academic portion of the high school curriculum was extended to include practical courses like business management, bookkeeping, office practices, industrial arts, homemaking and consumer economics. In addition to the emphasis on practical skills, schools stressed the inculcation of orderly habits and a work orientation, particularly for those whose formal education would end with high school graduation. According to a report of the National Manpower Council issued in 1954: "The school enforces a regular schedule by setting hours of arrival and attendance; assigns tasks that must be completed; rewards diligence, responsibility, and ability; corrects carelessness and ineptness; encourages ambition."

The School System Under Challenge

By the mid-twentieth century, mandates for the nation's education system were so broad that they encompassed nearly every conceivable objective regarding the development of young people and their future in society. With their far-reaching and conflicting goals, it is small wonder that public schools have been the focus of considerable criticism and disappointment. Though a greater proportion of young people attend school and receive more years of schooling than ever before, the impact of universal education on the academic abilities, practical knowledge, occupational readiness, employment prospects, and relative economic position of the nation's young is open to question.

Universal schooling has not, of course, eliminated the gap between wealth and poverty that exists in the country. Given the enormity of the forces that work against greater equality and mobility, it was probably unrealistic to expect that the effects of schooling on equal opportunity, much less equality of condition, would be more than marginal. Studies undertaken in the late 1960's by James Coleman, and in the 1970's by Christopher Jencks, among others, indicated that there are limitations in what the schools can do. The methodology of these studies has been criticized, but their central findings have been supported by other researchers. Coleman found that school performance is massively influenced by the social, economic, and family background of the child. Jencks went on to find that success in later life as measured by income bears almost no relationship to academic achievement, once the characteristics of an individual's family background have been taken into account. The main factors that appear to "predict" where a youth will eventually end up in the economic and social hierarchy are family structure, parental education, family income, and other factors related to accidents of birth rather than to schooling per se.

As in the past, public schools still attempt to hold society together by establishing a working consensus on values, tastes, and behavior among students whose backgrounds and experience might otherwise be in conflict. But while the homogenizing force at work in the schools may be as pervasive as it was in the past, its objectives are less clearly defined and its nature more indistinct. Fifty years ago, public schools were authoritarian in imposing rigid standards of behavior, belief, and demeanor. But educators of the past were confident that those standards, if successfully inculcated, would provide young people with an entre or advantage in a competitive but relatively stable society. Economic and social realities are changing rapidly, and there is much less certitude today about what values and orientations should be passed on to the young. The rigid standards that were enforced with imperious self-assurance have been replaced--not with a viable new consensus, some maintain, but by an innocuous, amorphous leveling process.

In its quest for relevancy, the public school system stresses the preparation of students for a productive role in the economy. This preparation, however, does not pertain primarily to the development of marketable skills. High schools are not able to provide most of their students with the skills and techniques they will actually use to earn a living. The jobs that will be available to most require the mastery of specialized procedures, machinery, or administrative routines that cannot practicably be duplicated in the school environment and must be learned on the job. Schools concentrate instead on the development of attitudes toward the self in relationship to others and on the student's potential economic function as an adult. Increasingly, the focus is on the individual's role as a consumer rather than as a producer in the economy. Though society stresses the economic advancement and security that education bring, the impact of high school on future success appears to be largely that of an enabling credential rather than a function of experience or learning.

In addition to questions about its practical relevancy, the school system is under attack for its alleged failure to adequately teach academic skills. While increasing proportions of graduates are enrolling in postsecondary schools rather than entering the full-time labor force, one study after another documents the steady decline of basic academic skills among the high school age population. In 1966, high school seniors scored an average of 467 points on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test; ten years later, in 1976, the average score was 429. Average scores on the mathematics portion of the SAT have dropped by 25 points since 1966. Reports of functional illiteracy among high school graduates have prompted the initiation of standardized basic skill examinations that must be passed in many states before graduation is allowed. High school and college teachers complain that students' ability to communicate in writing, their reasoning powers, their stock of historical information, and their knowledge of literature have all deteriorated dramatically over the past 10 to 15 years.

No one believes that today's students are stupid; they appear in many ways to be more sophisticated than their predecessors. But they are becoming more difficult to teach, at least by traditional methods. Though there is little doubt that young people are assimilating information and developing new orientations, much of this learning seems to take place outside of school. By age 16, the average adolescent has spent 12,000 to 15,000 hours in front of the television set. By the end of one typical year, the same average teenager has viewed 25,000 television commercials.

While educator observations and test scores point to a decline in traditional academic skills among the youth population, there is no basis for concluding that young people today are less well prepared for the world that they will encounter as adults. Automation and communication technology have changed the world. Mass media capabilities have changed historical patterns of information packaging and dissemination. Television oriented adolescents may well find themselves more in tune with the world of tomorrow than will those with traditional academic perspectives.

America has shifted from an industrial to a service economy. In spite of the fact that job functions have become increasingly specialized, some observers of contemporary society believe that the American economy has outlived the need for large numbers of traditionally educated workers. A major justification of the school system is its function in training young people for work, but critics, like Christopher Lasch, point out that an increasing number of available jobs, even in the higher economic ranges, no longer require high levels of academic skill or broad intellectual perspective. Many jobs consist so largely of specialized routines and techniques, and depend so little on general knowledge and resourcefulness, that applicants with a liberal education may find themselves "over-qualified" or unsuited for most positions.

Though its curriculum and instructional methods may be out of step with rapidly changing social and economic patterns, the public school system is still a major component in employment preparation--particularly in regard to credentials. For those aiming at a successful employment future, high school graduation is a necessary first step, and post-high school training is increasingly viewed as essential. By the mid-1970's, the majority of the nation's 18 and 19 year old population were students. In the 1980's, more young people are likely to pursue some type of education and training into their twenties. Young people remain in school longer in the belief that the education and training they receive will afford them better opportunities in the labor market. Many realize that even college educations are no guarantee of good jobs, but they are sufficiently aware of social realities to realize that if they leave school early, there is really no place for them to go.

The Dropout Problem

Even in our credential oriented society, there are thousands of young people who leave high school each year without graduating. The millions of young dropouts in the country today are seen by many as tangible proof of failure on the part of our education system. Though many older Americans function as productive members of society without the benefit of a high school diploma, there are few legitimate roles for the young high school dropout. The belief that "kids belong in school", is heavily engrained in public consciousness and is substantiated by economic realities. Jobs that were formerly available to unskilled teenagers have dwindled in the wake of automation, the decline of small business, and changing attitudes about child labor. The young person who leaves school at age 15, 16, or 17, is likely to be unemployed for some time before getting one of the dead-end, unskilled, or semi-skilled jobs available for those with little formal education. Dropouts may face lifetimes of substandard living and sporadic unemployment.

For nearly two decades, the dropout problem has caught the attention of media and government spokesmen. As the first early entrants of the "baby boom" generation began to flood into the labor market during the 1960's, concern with the magnitude and implications of the dropout problem was aroused at the highest levels of government. In 1961, Abraham Ribicoff, then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, warned the American public about the 2.5 million high school students who would be dropping out of school during the next three years. He spoke of the need to strengthen the country's education system so that more young people could be "held in school". In 1962 and 1963, President Kennedy stressed the values of education and the need to "reduce the alarming number of students who now drop out of school." Under Johnson, categorical manpower programs provided financial incentives designed to keep economically disadvantaged young people in school until graduation.

Concern with the dropout problem persisted through the 1970's and was exacerbated by general economic conditions and unprecedentialy high rates of youth unemployment. Educators and policy makers pointed with distress to school dropout rates as high as 30 percent in some states. Maintaining school enrollment and promoting high school completion were key objectives of YEDPA programs. YIEPP and YETP programs provided part-time work for young people who were willing to remain in school, and employment was used as leverage to convince young dropouts to return to school. Media campaigns urge those in school to stay there and those who have dropped out to return. In television commercials, radio spots, and comic books, dropouts are portrayed as "dead-enders". Young people are told: "Good jobs go to those who graduate," and, "You will earn more if you stay in school."

Is the dropout problem really growing? It depends on how you look at it. In spite of rhetoric about the dropout rate "reaching fantastic proportions", the percentage of young people who fail to receive high school diplomas has dropped steadily throughout the twentieth century. In 1900, only about ten percent of all male students remained in school until graduation. The high school drop rate was nearly 90 percent at the turn of the century, and it did not fall below fifty percent until the 1950's. By 1965, the dropout rate had declined to about 30 percent. Since that time, the percentage of students who leave high school before completion has dropped nearly ten points.

The proportion of dropouts has gone down. But the dropout problem is viewed as more serious than ever before, because the proportion of jobs that are suitable and available for dropouts is declining even more dramatically.

The present concern over school dropouts is not a result of an increase in the number or proportion of young people who do not finish school, but the fact that there is no place for the dropout to go in our economy. The predicament of the dropout has become more acute as society has accommodated itself to the concept of formal education as the major path to fulfillment.

While there is no doubt that the job market is tougher for dropouts these days, it is also tougher for young people whose education ends with high school graduation. Studies that show a great disparity in income levels and employment stability between dropouts and high school graduates often do not distinguish between those completors whose education ends with graduation, and those who go on to further schooling and may graduate from college or even from professional school. Though 20 years ago, high school graduation, in itself, meant a large boost in employment prospects, current research shows that the noticeable gain in average income now follows graduation from college, not from high school. Many believe that as post-secondary education becomes more nearly universal, earning a college degree will probably cease to bear any very significant relation to income.

All this does not mean that young people should not be encouraged to complete high school. Given society's preoccupation with credentials, those with the least education are likely to continue to fare worst in the job market. But the implications of the "anti-dropout" campaign should be more closely examined. There are indications that efforts intended to discourage young people from dropping out may have actually had the effect of worsening the problems faced by those who leave school before graduation. Bachman, Green, and Wirtanen warned educators of the possible double-sided effects of crusades to reduce high school non-completion nearly ten years ago:

> In one sense the (anti-dropout) campaign has been a preventive effort directed against dropping out. But as a by-product of this effort, the campaign has also come to be directed against the dropout himself. No matter how good its intentions, the anti-dropout campaign has often criticized and ridiculed the dropouts...What, then, do we do when we conduct a national anti-dropout campaign that downgrades the status of dropouts, and perhaps encourages employers to make the diploma a requirement when it need not be? It seems just possible that our treatment of dropping out as a national problem has some of the features of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Perhaps for some young (people) the greatest disadvantage in being a dropout is measured not in terms of the education they lost, but rather in terms of the stigma they acquired.
>
> Bachman, J., et al (1971) Dropping Out--Problem or Symptom?

Who Drops Out?

Although they have had only limited success in preventing high school noncompletion, educators are often able to predict with surprising accuracy which young people will become dropouts. It has long been recognized that youth from economically disadvantaged homes, and those who do poorly in school, are dropout prone. An adolescent who starts tenth grade with a good academic record, fairly positive attitudes about school, and high socio-economic level family background is extremely likely to finish high school and go on to college. Tenth graders who are significantly lower in these dimensions are more apt to drop out of school before graduation, and those who do complete are much less likely to enter college. Young people with a history of delinquent behavior in school stand far better than average chances of becoming dropouts.

Study after study has shown that family income bears a critical relationship to school performance and high school completion. Since the classic study, Who Shall Be Educated? was published in 1944, numerous researchers have confirmed that family income and educational attainment are closely linked. In their late 1960's longitudinal study of the school and employment experiences of a young male sample group, Bachman and his associates found that the higher his family socio-economic level, the more likely a boy was to perform well in high school and to enter college and the less likely he was to drop out of high school. In general, the more a child's parents earn, the better are his or her prospects for completing more years of schooling with higher grades.

YEDPA was targeted on the economically disadvantaged, and there is a higher than average proportion of dropouts among the youth population eligible for employment and training programs. A survey of potential participants in the YIEPP program showed that over one-third of the 16 to 19 year old low income sample were dropouts during the 1977-1978 school year. Though dropouts rates were above average among the YEDPA applicant pool, the large majority of the young people who actually enrolled in YEDPA programs were high school students. About 30 percent of all YETP and YIEPP participants were enrolled in high school when they applied for program admission. Only in the smaller, non-income tested YCCIP program did the enrollment percentages of dropouts exceed those of students.

The Youth Perspectives Project was focused on YEDPA participants who had not yet graduated from high school. Among the 32 case study participants, there were 16 non-graduates who were out of school at the time of program enrollment, and four others who had dropped out of school at least once. Most of the dropouts in the case study group came from families with low income, but a number came from middle income, or even upper middle income, family backgrounds. There were also 12 participants in the case study group who had never dropped out of school, and most of these participants went on to graduate during the course of the research period. Economic disadvantagement was just as prevalent among this latter group, yet all remained continuously enrolled in school and each was firmly committed to high school completion. Though family income is a big factor in high school performance, characteristics associated with dropping out clearly go beyond economic disadvantagement. What additional factors are related to high school noncompletion?

Beyond income, other family dimensions appear to be linked to educational attainment and high school completion. Among the Youth in Transition (YIT) sample, Bachman and his associates found that broken homes made a measurable difference in dropout rates. They concluded that dropping out of high school was about twice as likely among boys whose parents were separated by death or divorce. Two of the 20 dropouts in the YP case study group were orphans living with older siblings, and all but six of the remaining dropouts were from single parent families. However, the great majority of young people from single parent homes do not drop out of high school. The YIT research team discovered that the quality of family relations was also a factor in high school completion. YIT researchers found that dropping out occurred more frequently as reported parental punitiveness increased and as family relationships deteriorated. A number of YP case study participants, like Todd Clinton, Douglas Giscard, and Peggy Bromfield, were involved in a series of intense confrontations with authoritarian parents just prior to dropping out of school.

Past school experiences are an important predictor of educational attainment. YIT researchers found that boys who had been held back a grade in school by the time they reached the tenth grade were four times as likely to drop out as those who had not. Students with a history of poor grades are also more likely to leave high school before graduation. Only three of the 20 YP case study participants who had dropped out had grade averages above "C" during the year before leaving school, and most were getting "D"'s or failing marks in at least some classes. Several participants were a grade level behind standard when they dropped out, and one participant, Bobby Jones, left school at age 16 after being told he would have to repeat the ninth grade the following year. But it is important to note that while poor school performance preceded dropping out, among YP participants, it was not necessarily linked to lack of learning capability. Over half of the YP case study participants who left school without graduating had been able to get "A"'s or "B"'s in classes that they liked enough to do the required work.

In terms of educational attainment, young blacks are approaching parity with the young white population. While higher percentages of minority youth leave school before graduation, differences in dropout rates between the white and non-white youth population are largely accounted for by differences in average socio-economic level. When family income and other socio-economic factors are held constant, black youth appear as likely as white youth to complete high school. Nationally, blacks from segregated schools appear to be more likely to drop out than those attending integrated schools. But the experience of YP case study participants suggests that desegregation can negatively impact high school completion rates for some of the black population. Each of the non-white case study participants from Boston who was transferred and bused into a new school, as part of the city's court ordered desegregation, dropped out of high school within a year's time.

In predicting high school completion, a number of personality and behavior dimensions appear to be pertinent. Bachman and his associates found dropout rates to be lower and college entrance more frequent among youth with high needs for self-development and self-utilization, and among those who felt some control over their own destinies. A number of studies have found that measures of self-esteem are positively related to educational attainment. Friedenberg believes that young people who make it in school are often better "operators" than those who do not; they have more outside support and connections, are more familiar with bureaucratic modes, and are better able to take advantage of opportunities. The better operator description seemed to fit a number of the continuous attenders in the YP case study group. Over half of the continuous attenders made use of CETA or other youth programs by the time they were 15 or 16 years old. But most of the dropouts in the case study group did not even know that such programs existed until just before their current enrollment.

In contrast with other personality dimensions, YIT researchers found that individuals with very high needs for independence were more likely to become dropouts than those with average independence needs. In his study of values transmitted in American high schools, Edgar Friedenberg categorized a certain portion of young people who fare badly in school as "divergent thinkers". The divergent youngster is characterized by an unusual degree of originality, spontaneous feeling, and a highly idiosyncratic, personal response to people and events. A number of YP dropouts, like Sandy Bonds, Todd Clinton, Douglas Giscard, and Jack Thrush, seemed to fit within this definition. They were more independent than most of their classmates and more apt to balk at pressures to accept group norms or submit to the expectations of authorities. Sandy Bonds' comments were typical of this group:

> I'm not going to say I've always done whatever I wanted, but I always really wanted to do what _I_ wanted and what _I_ thought, and not what someone else thought.

Other interview comments suggest that though these case study participants knew "how the game was played" at school, they did not believe that pleasing teachers and fitting in successfully was worth what it cost in independence and self-esteem. The two interview excerpts below show the contrasts in attitude toward school authorities between a divergent student, who chose his own path and who eventually dropped out, and a more conventional student, who bought into the system and went on to graduate.

> When I was going to school, the teachers seemed to be mainly impressed with a certain kind of people. The people that were constantly trying. The people that ran around and more or less did just exactly what the teachers said. And that wasn't me...I mean I usually did what I had to, but I didn't get across the way they wanted...I wasn't into brown-nosing my teachers. I just didn't let them walk on me, that was all. The teachers didn't seem to want to have much to do with you if you had a mind of your own. That's not the way it should be, but that's the way it was.
>
> Todd Clinton; dropout, 1977

> Some people at school don't like the principal, Mr. Fitzpatrick, cuz he gets on their case. I don't do nothing wrong in school, so I don't have him on my case. That's why we're friends. I can go to him for anything. See, I help him out. If I see someone doin' something wrong, and he asks me for a girl's name... sure, I'll tell him. Cuz if they do something to ruin my privileges, then I feel that it's okay I tell on 'em. Cuz I don't want to lose my privileges for anything.
>
> Jessica Jackson; graduate, Class of 1979

What Dropouts Say About School

During the Youth Perspectives interviews, all the case study participants were asked to talk about their high school experience. They discussed particular aspects of school life, like academic record, subject matter, school policies, and social life, as well as their general feelings about being a high school student. It came as no surprise to find that most of the dropouts had disliked high school. Compared to the continuous attenders, who went on to graduate during the course of the study, dropouts expressed more negative feelings about school experiences and were more dissatisfied with both the roles they had played in school and the way in which the schools they attended had been operated.

It is probably typical of all students to be somewhat critical about the schools they attend. Though educational resources are mobilized for the benefit of students, young people generally have little say in how services are delivered and little control over the rules to which they must, as students, comply. Some grousing is predictable, but most students make their peace with the system. A few students flourish and excel in every aspect of school experience; some make a place for themselves by refining skills in one or two areas; many settle for anonimity and mediocrity; and still others move uneasily between rebellion and bored resignation. Whether their experiences in high school are predominantly positive or negative, most students remain until graduation--either because they link school completion with personal employment or educational objectives, or because there appear to be no viable alternatives.

Disparaging comments about school were not uncommon among the case study participants. Some continuous attenders liked school and were outstanding students. Others were just marking time until graduation. But nearly all of the non-dropout participants accepted their own involvement in high school and its routines as a necessity. Very few questioned the basic assumptions of an education system that required them to spend six or seven hours a day, five days a week, thirty-six or so weeks a year, in a classroom, under the charge of teachers in whose selection they had no voice, performing tasks about which they had little choice. Perhaps this was because most of the continuous attenders believed that high school "prepares you for life", and that those who did best in school would be most successful out in the world. When asked how high school could be improved, a number of the non-dropouts were unable to envision anything substantially different from the existing systems. As one young woman said, "I like it the way it is now, pretty much. I guess I'm so used to it, I wouldn't really want any changes."

The attitudes of participants who had dropped out of high school stood in sharp contrast to the rather passive acceptance of school procedure and authority evidenced by most continuous attenders. Nearly one-half of the 20 participants who had left high school at some time before completion indicated that what they most disliked about school was the amount of control it exerted over their behavior and movement. In some cases, participants focused their complaints on specific policies and rules that seemed arbitrary and unnecessarily restrictive. Douglas Giscard protested against the regulations imposed by a strict Catholic school, where "you had to have your hair really short, couldn't wear tennis shoes, and had to have your shirt tucked in all the time." But few other participants had attended schools with such rigid requirements. Most reacted in a more general way against the authoritarian nature of the school system and the assumption they had to comply. Sandy Bonds' comments about her high school experience were typical of this group of dropouts:

> I hated it with a passion!...Some of the people...some teachers...the routine...but mostly the fact that it was mandatory. That really got to me. The attitude, you know, "There's nothing you can do about it; you're going to school and don't give me no shit." That was it. Everybody said you have to do it this way, and I didn't have a choice to do what I want. That really upset me.

In general, case study participants who dropped out of high school had poorer academic records than those who remained in school until graduation. Dropouts typically showed particularly poor academic performance during the period just before leaving school. For some, this was a final stage in a history of academic failure, but for others, low grades were a recent development that reflected their lack of interest in school. Less than one-third of the dropouts reported having had substantial difficulty understanding basic concepts. Only five of the 20 participants who had dropped out of school described themselves as slower than average learners.

These self-described slow learners expressed frustration with their classroom experiences and disappointment with their own performance, but none felt he or she was incapable of learning basic academic skills. Several were able to maintain average grades in general courses like English and Basic Math but had a much harder time with more sophisticated subjects. Todd Clinton says, "I'm the kind of person it takes me a long time to learn new things, but once I understand something, it's like I've really got it." Todd had no serious problem in Math I, but he had a difficult time adjusting to Algebra and failed it once before he finally managed to get a "C".

A number of dropouts who had done fairly well in grammar school or junior high said they were surprised to find the work much more demanding for high school level courses. Carrie Green said:

> When I started taking harder classes in the tenth grade, that's when I ran into trouble. Biology, especially, was real hard for me. I was like a slow learner. I would try to raise my hand when I didn't understand. But the teacher, you know, she wouldn't want to slow everyone down just for me.

Participant school performance seemed to be affected by differences in the academic requirements and standards of the schools they attended. Some schools had a wide variety of classes and program tracks. The most able students were channelled into college prep programs with more challenging classes, but many of the students with less apparent ability were put in general programs, where they were not discouraged from filling their schedules with "easy credits". Several dropouts complained that the more interesting employment related classes at their schools were also reserved for the academically proficient. Jack Thrush said:

> I thought school was supposed to prepare you for life. But from what I've seen, you gotta be one of the so-called better students just to get into these classes where they teach you business or job skills and all that stuff. If you're not a good student, you're in these plain classes that are real boring. And I would usually just slide in there.

Several students who dropped out soon after transferring from one high school to another noticed a big difference in the academic standards at their new schools. Patty Monson said:

> I enjoyed school when I was in Utah, but I hated the school I transferred to in Kitsap County. It was so much harder! You'd have to go through all your life at school there to be able to do the work in high school. I just couldn't catch up.

A substantial portion of the dropouts seemed to have a hard time relating to much of the high school curriculum. These young people favored practical courses, or, as one young man said; "Classes that teach you things you need to know--stuff that you'll really use, like how to balance a checkbook." Consumer Economics and Personal Finance were considered by a number of continuous attenders to be the most worthwhile classes they had taken in high school. But most of the dropouts said that they had never had the opportunity to take these kinds of practical courses. Sandy Bonds had a lot to say about the things she wished she had learned in school:

> They oughta teach you how to handle yourself financially--how to make a decision on your own, how to rent an apartment, how to talk to people when you're being interviewed for a job, how to read and understand contracts, and the whole thing--things like that, you know? Like what to do with your bank account, and where to go to get the best deals. Even down to shopping. I mean they oughta teach somebody how to shop for groceries. A lot of people don't know how.

Most of the dropouts in the case study group acknowledged that there was a need to learn basic reading, writing, and math skills at school, but beyond that they could see little point in some of the subjects they had been required to study. The following comments reflect the impatience of some dropouts with different aspects of the traditional curriculum:

- Fundamentals of English--who cares! I don't think that's something you should really have to take. Like diagramming sentences...I mean, how often do you need to do that in life? But it seemed like, in school, they wanted you to do it over and over.

- Social studies is one thing; it's about what's happening now, at least. But all that History, it just didn't make any sense. I don't understand why you would need to know about things way back in the past.

- Everybody needs some English, basic grammar and stuff like that, just to talk and all. You need to read and write, but I don't like to write just to be writing. I'm a carpenter and I don't need to be writing compositions, you know. All that stuff about nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs--it just seems really confusing to me.

- Some of the things we were supposed to learn in school just didn't seem necessary. Some of the information you'd read in books...it seemed old, out-of-date or something. It was like it wasn't real. I don't know...I'd find myself kind of reading things and wondering, maybe this is right or maybe it isn't.

Dropouts who questioned the relevancy of the academic curriculum were often very work oriented. They wanted to gain job related skills and couldn't see any reason for spending so much time on subjects that held little interest or immediate value for them. One young woman said: "It would be neat if school would teach you whatever you needed or wanted to know about a special job you wanted, or special way that you wanted to make an income." A number of other dropouts favored more autonomy in the classroom and more individual choice over subject matter. Douglas Giscard offered the following comment:

> I'd like to change the high school classes. I'd like to have it so that a kid could go into a classroom and have him study for as long as he feels like studying and not feel pushed into it. He should get what he wants to get out of it, not what other people want him to get.

The dropouts in the case study group had a lot to say about teachers and teaching methods. They reported having had both "good" teachers and "bad" teachers. Most felt that the latter outnumbered the former. There was general agreement that a good teacher should be knowledgeable about the subject that he or she is teaching. Though there were isolated reports of "students knowing more than the teachers knew," most participants admitted that they were in no position to judge a teacher's level of erudition; and they were more apt to be concerned with a teacher's approach and manner in the classroom. There were many complaints about teachers that didn't seem to be able to relate to their students, and a number of participants associated such inability with age.

- Some teachers were pretty good as far as the studies went. As far as relating to a student, they weren't so hot. Most of them had a hard time, because they had really structured ideas of behavior and values.

- Well, different strokes for different folks. Some of them, they taught their subjects well, but I couldn't see how they could even be a teacher. The younger teachers seemed to at least try to get close to the kids, but the older ones would just stay out. One track, that was it.

- This may sound really prejudiced, but it seemed like most of the older teachers just couldn't handle it. I would have liked more younger teachers. They seemed so more up with the times...more willing to bend their ideas, you know, and not just to have a set something in their minds.

Given their negative feelings about many of the teachers they've had, one might expect that potential dropouts would want to avoid teacher contact as much as possible. But nearly all of the case study participants who had dropped out of school reported that they would have liked more interaction with their teachers. These participants wished their teachers had been more observant and paid more attention to them and their needs. They believed that a good teacher really cares about each student. As Sven Latoka said, "The worst teachers are the ones that just try to contain you for an hour or so." Luanne Clawson felt that "teachers should be noticing more about who needs help. When someone asks a question, they should stop and really help them instead of getting impatient." It was something of a surprise to find that along with more individual attention and special recognition, some dropouts would have liked more pressure from their high school teachers. The attitude expressed by Bobby Jones, a ninth grade dropout, was not unusual among this group:

> I like the teacher to push me a little, be on my back sometimes. I like for people to come out and talk to me...to tell me, you know, "you're smart, you can do something with yourself." I wish I'd have had teachers who come out and told me that I could do it. It would have been no problem doing the work, you know. I could've done it; it's just that I didn't. I like to get individual attention. I think I could work better if it was just me and the teacher. That way I could stop and ask questions, you know.

A number of dropouts felt that the major problem with the high schools they had left was that they were just too large. They believed the problem lay more in the size of the school than in the quality of the teaching staff. Opportunities for close interaction or individual attention from teachers were minimal because class sizes were too big and there were too many students.

> It was just too over-crowded at West Roxbury. Like there would be thirty or more kids in a class. And I know it be hard on the teacher to teach one, you know, and still teach the whole class. Cuz some people learn slow, some learn fast. So many kids can't hardly keep up. I think it's hard on the teacher cuz she can't just stop for one special person, you know. She can't hardly slow down the others.
>
> Luanne Clawson

> The last high school I went to was a good school, academically, the teachers and everything. But the school held seven thousand people. It was a big school, almost like a college. And there wasn't much contact between you and the teacher. In a school like that, you got to want to be there, you know, to get by.
>
> Sandy Bonds

While participants who had dropped out complained about the academic requirements and teaching methods in their high schools, most acknowledged that their poor performance had a lot to do with their own lack of effort. Most dropouts were skipping school frequently in the period just before leaving, and very few reported having done any studying outside the classroom during this time. But the majority felt that they were capable of doing the required work and probably would have done reasonably well if they had applied themselves. The following comments are typical of the dropouts in the case study group:

> When I got to Central, I started messing around. I was skipping and everything. But, you know, I could have went to class, and I could have did the work okay, if I had wanted to.
>
> Jack Thrush

> The work got to be real hard for me, because I didn't study for it at all. But I know if I would've listened in class and studied, then it wouldn't have been hard.
>
> Jean Ansel

> I didn't like most of my classes so I hardly ever did any of the assignments. The only class I really studied in was literature, because I like to read. So I did pretty good in that.
>
> Harold Thomas

In spite of the fact that dropouts had typically devoted little time to studying and many said that they hadn't really cared how poorly they performed during the time before they dropped out, a number of them showed a surprising amount of concern over issues of grading. Within the case study group, continuous attenders at the low end of the academic achievement scale were generally not very concerned about grades. Among this group, the following kinds of remarks were common: "I'd rather get good grades, but I'm not going to worry about it if I get a "D" or something." "As long as I try my best, it's okay." "As long as it's a passing grade, it doesn't really matter that much to me." "If I understand how to do it that's the important thing." On the other hand, dropouts whose grades had been poor often showed a preoccupation with grades as a measure of achievement. Some said grades were really important to their parents, and they were under considerable pressure to bring home a good report card. Several years after dropping out, some were still actively upset over what they considered to be unfair grading practices:

> If we came home with lower than a "C", we used to get in big trouble. In some classes, I would get lower grades than I really deserved. Like I was doing "B" work, and when my report card came, I would get a "C-" or something. Some teachers just didn't like me, and they'd grade me down for no reason.
>
> Lynn Hazelton

> I would change that school's rules about grading. Like I'd be getting a "B-" in Algebra, and they'd give me an "F"--just because of unexcused absences. I think if a person's responsible and knows what they're doing, they don't need to come so often in a certain class. They shouldn't just grade you down.
>
> Peggy Bromfield

> Grades were a big thing with my parents. They liked to brag about my brother and all. If we got good grades, we got money; like for each "A", we got a dollar, and a "B" was fifty cents. When my grades started sliding, I didn't get any money of course. By that time I didn't really care...only sometimes it bothered me, cuz I didn't think the grade I got was fair.
>
> Sven Latoka

Social life and acceptance or rejection by their peers is another aspect of school experience with which many dropouts seem to have problems. When Elvira Taylor, who reported hating high school, was asked what could have improved her school experience, she answered, in a defeated tone: "There's nothing that could be changed up there. Cuz it's just the people theirselves, the students that go there. There ain't no way you can change that. Not unless people change their minds about the way they feel." Most of the dropouts had somewhat less negative impressions of their former fellow students, but relatively few were satisfied with the position to which they had been relegated in the social fabric of their school.

Nearly a third of the dropouts indicated that they had been somewhat of a "loner" during the year or two before leaving school. Though most claimed that this role was adopted by choice, there was evidence of dissatisfaction in several cases. The following types of comments were not unusual among the dropouts in the case study group:

> I've always been a loner. No really close friends, just acquaintances. I got hassled some in school. Like I never went to my English class because they harassed me. These boys in there called me Wilma Flintstone, because they said my teeth looked like the stone age. I talked to my counselor about it once, and she said, "Do you think that might be their way of expressing that they like you?" And I said, "That's crazy really. I don't like that at all."
>
> Peggy Bromfield

> I didn't like being around too many people in high school. I don't like to be in the public eye. And I don't like to associate with people when I'm against their principles.
>
> Douglas Giscard

> I was pretty far removed from others--at my own choice. There was a big social thing at both schools I went to, but I didn't choose to have any part of it.
>
> Sven Latoka

Many high schools seem to be extremely athletically orientated, and involvement or lack of involvement in sports can have a major impact on where a young man fits in the high school social hierarchy. In some schools, not being a "jock" automatically limits the social status a young man can hope to achieve among his peers. Bobby Jones says the only time he really enjoyed school was when he was a star on the junior high school basketball team. Being eliminated from the junior varsity football squad for poor grades in his freshman year was a major blow to his ego. Todd Clinton talked about the discrimination he felt from the high school athletes:

> That school was really big on sports--which didn't impress me too much because they were always trying to impress everybody else. I wasn't a real long-hair or negative person, but I didn't play ball. I would talk to jocks and everything, but I just didn't like a lot of their attitudes. You know, "I can do anything, and you're nothing." I didn't like that attitude. Because I treated them as, you know, as well as they would have treated me--if I'd have been a jock.

The comments of Tina Middleton, a non-dropout, about the role that athletics played in her school, tend to corroborate Todd's view of the social stratification in a sports oriented high school:

> We're always first in the league. I think we have a good school. But people who come from other schools say we're a bunch of dummies. We're known as jocks, but I still think we learn a lot. We have a lot of school spirit. It's definitely an athletically oriented school. It's starting to change, but for a while there, either you were an athlete or you were a nothing.

Students who transfer during their high school years sometimes have a difficult time making the transition to a new social environment. Among the case study dropouts were several transfer students who had not been able to make a successful social adjustment to a new school. Patty Monson felt that she wasn't accepted by the young people in her new Kitsap County school, whose socio-economic status and academic skills were more advanced than those of her former classmates in Utah. "The kids were just more stuck-up, and they liked theirselves a lot more. I guess it was because they were so much better and they knew it." Since she couldn't seem to find a place in the mainstream, Patty associated with the kids who were fooling around and cutting classes. Another participant who had been a transfer student said, "If I had stayed at West, I would still have been in school today. I had so much fun there. But there was nothing at East. The cafeteria was small, you don't get any privileges, and the people were all stuck-up."

Integration and Violence

> South Boston High when they was integratin', that was a rough time! It was like being a nigger in the fifties. It was dangerous. They all say they hate niggers, you know. Couldn't hardly walk down the corridor but what you'd get jumped. They started all that. Ain't nobody wanted to be bused.
>
> Adam Sledge

Among the case study participants whose high school experiences were disrupted by inter-school transfers was a small group of young people in Boston. These students did not move from one neighborhood to another, not did they or their families decide upon a change in school. They were assigned to new schools as part of a court-ordered, city-wide desegregation plan. For the young blacks and Hispanics who were bused into formerly all-white high schools, like South Boston, and the young whites who were bused into predominantly black schools, mandatory transfer meant more than a change in social environment or academic standards. It meant leaving their neighborhoods each day to attend school in alien territory, where they encountered the active hostility of their new classmates and the wider community. Forced integration in Boston triggered acts of violence from adult members of the community, who feared and opposed desegregation. It also triggered violence in the schools and disrupted the lives and education of many students, who scarcely understood what was happening or why.

South Boston High School was the scene of the most explosive desegregation confrontations. South Boston is a close-knit, white, working class community. Its residents tend to see their neighborhood schools as vehicles for educating their young and passing on to them the values that reinforce community stability. Racial fear and prejudice run high throughout South Boston. Federally directed busing was viewed by many residents as both an immediate threat and as a direct challenge to the principle of local autonomy over the school. In the minds of many "Southies", several bus loads of black students represented a serious threat to the order and quality of their schools and to the security and well-being of their community. Whites in South Boston opposed busing for the increase in violence and crime, and the educational deterioration they felt it was bound to bring. In their opposition, they created a climate that spawned violence and made the effective delivery of educational services nearly impossible.

The integration of South Boston High School began in 1975. The minority case study participants who received their busing orders for the 1976-77 school year had ample opportunity to hear reports and rumors of the kind of treatment they could expect, as non-whites, to encounter at South Boston High. They knew that the white community didn't want them there, and they were frightened.

When Felisa Santana discovered, upon her family's return from Puerto Rico, that she would be assigned to South Boston, she made the decision not to return to public school. "I knew there would just be riots every day, cuz they're so prejudiced there," Felisa says. "The white people didn't want us Puerto Ricans or blacks to go up there, cuz they thought it was their school." She decided to enroll instead in a bilingual community based school, even though it meant sacrificing instruction in some subjects and managing her own transportation from Dorchester into downtown Boston each day.

Genetta Burke was in the tenth grade when she received her "busing papers". She said:

> Even though I was too old to cry, I stood outside near the buses and cried, cuz my mother made me go to school. I'd seen all the reports on T.V., and I just didn't want to go there.

Adam Sledge said that he felt "terrible" the day his papers arrived:

> I knew it was gonna be bad, because they had had the idea that we did it to 'em, you know...like we made the rules or somethin'. But we didn't want to come to their school as much as they didn't want us to be there, you know.

The experiences of the black participants who were bused into South Boston confirmed their negative expectations and fears. Genetta Burke was transferred during the early period of desegregation when community reactions were especially violent. Four years later, her memories of this time are still vivid:

> Everybody called us niggers. And they'd hold up bananas and stuff when you'd come down the hill by the school. I mean, there were grown people, shouting, waving bananas at us...sayin' stuff like, "Hey, monkey, want

> your food?" They were bombing the buses and throwing stuff. Yeah, I was scared. Sure I was.
>
> I think the teachers cared--some of 'em anyway. But you know, it was like you couldn't hardly study. Because if there was like a bad group of white people behind, you know, they would start trouble. Because in the classrooms, there was like only two or three blacks and all the rest white. And you know, there was nothin' you could do, really. Sometimes they'd just start throwin' chairs and stuff at you. Stuff like that.
>
> I got trapped up there the day that they trapped everybody up in the school. A white guy got stabbed. Yeah, I was right behind him when he got stabbed, too. And they trapped us all in the school. We couldn't get out...We was in there, um, well, for hours. We finally got out through the side door. They almost got us though. Cause they had hockey sticks and rocks and bats. And we didn't have nothin'.

Harold Thomas was assigned to South Boston High in 1977, when he moved to Dorchester from Virginia. Harold had attended an integrated high school in the South, where, he says, "there were never any real problems." "Sure, each group tended to stick to their own some," Harold recalls. "But at school, it didn't really matter to no one whether you was black or white." Harold was not prepared for the hostility he encountered in South Boston:

> It just didn't make any sense at all for people to feel like that. I tried to walk away. But I couldn't help it. When somebody jumps on me, I can't just sit there and let them beat me up. So I fought back.

Adam Sledge attended South Boston during the same year, and he too felt that he had to "fight back" to protect himself and his family members:

> When they said nigger this and nigger that, I just walk by 'em--until they put their hands on me. Then I had no choice but to fight, cuz I wasn't getting myself hurt. I had to watch my brother and my sister, you know. They was goin' there too. If they know your family is there, they try to get to you by getting to your family. It got so I was fighting every day up there.

Integration is supposed to improve the quality of educational services for non-white students, but integration in Boston's schools seems to have had a largely negative impact on those most directly involved. None of the black case study participants assigned to South Boston stayed there for more than one year. Harold Thomas grew tired of fighting. He dropped out of school and joined the Army Reserves. Genetta Burke became pregnant toward the end of her first year at South Boston. She was able to transfer into a special maternity school, but after the baby was born, she dropped out of school rather than return to South Boston. Adam Sledge requested a transfer to a technical high school, where he spent three months in the eleventh grade before dropping out. His sister stopped going to school midway through the year. She stayed at home until she was able to get a transfer for the next school year. Adam's brother left school for good during his first year at South Boston High School.

Reasons for Leaving School

Economically disadvantaged students are more likely to drop out of high school than are their classmates from higher income families; does this mean that most students who become dropouts leave school for financial reasons? Among the YP case study group, none of the 20 dropouts left school primarily because of economic need. Although a number of the case study dropouts felt they would rather be out working and earning money at the time they dropped out of school, each was also motivated by non-financial considerations. Most of the dropouts cited a combination of reasons for leaving school before graduation. About half said they left primarily for school related reasons. For the other half, personal considerations and family problems were a major factor in the decision to drop out.

Some of the case study participants had a difficult time articulating their "reasons" for leaving school, but their patterns were similar and distinct. Though participants like Carrie Green, Lynn Hazelton, and Sven Latoka believed that "education is important", they were not able to stay interested in school. They began to skip classes frequently. Typically their grades dropped dramatically during the period before leaving school. The prospect of academic failure seemed to erode whatever positive connection they may have felt in their role as students. Several participants made conscious decisions to leave, but most just spent more and more time away from school. The longer they stayed away, the more problems there were to face, so eventually they stopped coming to school altogether. Few of the participants who "lost interest" in school went through any formal process of dropping out.

> Well, I don't know. I never liked school very much. My girlfriend, Michelle--I've known her for years--every time she'd see me, we'd go off together to the parking lot and just sit. If it was a nice day, I'd go along with her when she skipped...My grades had been "B"'s and "C"'s before. Then I went down to "D"'s and "F"'s. It was bad news. It got to be too much pressure. So I finally just said forget it.
>
> Carrie Green

> I didn't really drop out...I just didn't go. Me and my girlfriend were in all the same classes, and she always wanted to skip. So I'd skip with her. I wasn't passing in any of my classes so I stopped going.
>
> Lynn Hazelton

> It's hard for me to relate to this now, but it was just lack of interest. I hated the school I went to, but if I could turn back time, now I would keep going. I didn't just drop right out. I...well, some days I'd be there, some days I wouldn't. Then finally, I just didn't go at all.
>
> Sven Latoka

None of the young dropouts who are quoted above liked school. They felt no connection to school beyond their attachment to one or two likeminded friends. They never bothered to confront school authorities, and one wonders if their slipping away from school went entirely unnoticed.

There was another group of case study dropouts whose dislike of school was more actively expressed during the period before they dropped out. They became involved in conflicts with school authorities, and their final exits were more abrupt and dramatic. Jack Thrush was considered to be a discipline problem by his teachers. He was punished by suspension several times and spent a number of short stints away from school before he finally decided to "drop out for good" in the eleventh grade:

> School always seemed really weird to me. I didn't like bein' in class or anything. Most of the time, I'd come to school and end up leavin' and skip. Just come there and meet all my friends and leave. When I did go to class, I'd usually get in trouble. I had a hard time talkin' to the teachers. They all seemed so rigid or somethin'. The first time I quit for awhile, it was cuz I had got kicked out for ten days. I was busted for grass, and that blew the rest of the tenth grade.
>
> But I went back to school. I was gonna go back and try harder in the eleventh grade. I went about the first three days. My schedule was mixed up, and I missed two days on my Math class. I hadn't been there yet, and it was on the third day of school. And I went to the class. The teacher was still talkin' to the students, gettin' to know them and all this. And he started sayin' stuff like, "When you're in this class, I want you to forget all about your other classes." He said, "Forget all

> about your other classes; this is the only important one." Then he started sayin', "In here, I'm God..." And he started talkin' like he had all the power in his hands, and I just...He said somethin' like, "If anybody thinks they can get up and leave this class, they're gonna have to deal with me." I raised my hand, and I said, "I'm getting up and leavin'. And I'm never comin' back." I got up and walked out of the school. And I never did go back either.

Sandy Bonds and Douglas Giscard were also involved in authority conflicts at school for several years before they dropped out. Sandy had been referred to juvenile court a number of times for truancy and gang fighting at school. Douglas had been reprimanded many times for failure to obey the rules in the strict Catholic school he attended. He was a good student, but he believes he was singled out as a troublemaker because of his conflicting values. When he decided to drop out, Douglas says:

> I told them one last time exactly what I thought about that school, and then I just left and did not return. I guess they assumed I was no longer going to be back in school when they heard no word from me after I left.

Both Sandy and Douglas decided that there must be other things they could do besides going to school, but neither had a job or any definite plan for getting one. Douglas says, "I didn't really know what I wanted. I was at a really radical stage." Sandy says:

> I saw some people that...their parents would support 'em since they didn't go to school. And I thought I'd try it. I just never wanted to go to school. I wanted to do other things, like writing songs and tryin' to get a job. Found that was impossible. Our social make-up actually forces you to go to school. I guess they figure just because you have ideas and have read a couple books, that doesn't tell me you're smart enough to work.

While most of the dropouts had no definite plans when they left school, there were a number of exceptions. Some participants were dissatisfied with their school experiences, but they were more cautious and planned more carefully than the other dropouts did. They didn't leave their high schools until they had worked out other alternatives. Three case study participants left the public school system, but they didn't discontinue their education; they transferred into GED programs.

Luanne Clawson left West Roxbury High School to enroll in a "YES" project, operated under Boston's YIEPP program. She wants to be a secretary and plans to go to junior college. But she wasn't doing very well in school, and she was dissatisfied with the way things were going at West Roxbury:

> That's the reason I left--because I wasn't really learning nothing. In my classes, the teacher would just pass me over. If I be absent, she would say, "I can't go back to that work right now. I give it to you later." But when later comes, she never give it to me. So I just say, you know, "Hey, I'll just go the YES program." I heard about on the radio and all, and I knew some kids there that liked it. I thought maybe, um, you know, I could get more out of it than school.

Luanne had to get a waiver signed by the West Roxbury principal in order to enroll in the YIEPP project. He advised her not to transfer, but he told her she could come back if it didn't work out. The YES project in which Luanne enrolled operated out of a Dorchester community center. She attended GED preparation classes in the morning, and did clerical work in the office during the afternoons. She had been in a vocational business program at West Roxbury, but she says that she learned more about office work from three months in her part-time job than she had learned in two years at West Roxbury.

Harold Thomas says that he knew he had to get out of South Boston High School. He requested a transfer, but it didn't come through. He thought about going back to Virginia, but didn't feel that he could abandon his sisters. He didn't consult his school counselor when he finally decided to join the Army Reserves:

> I didn't want to talk to nobody up there, cuz I didn't want to adjust to it. The way things are up here...I just don't want to be like that. I felt they would talk to me in a way--they'd been living up here and all--I felt they would try to change my mind or change the way I lived. I was goin' only about once or twice a week... working and trying to figure out what to do. And I decided that I'd be better off joining the Army Reserves. So that's what I done...If I hadn't come up here, I know I'd still be in school. I would be graduating this year.

Elvira Taylor wanted to complete high school so that she could go to Mount Hood Community College in Portland and take a cosmetology course. Elvira didn't like the public high school, where she was enrolled as a tenth grade student. "I didn't get along with the people there," Elvira says. "They gossip. I mean people just go around telling things that's not even true, and I didn't like that." Elvira believes that, "when I don't get along with people, it's best for me to leave." In order to transfer into an alternative education program, sponsored by a black community-based organization, she had to obtain a "release" from the principal at the public high school.

Elvira attended classes at the alternative school for six months, but became dissatisfied when she realized that, at the pace she was working, it would be over two full years before she obtained a high school certificate. "I didn't have enough credits," Elvira says, "and I knew I couldn't bring 'em up before next year, so I just decided to go for a GED instead." With a recommendation from her school counselor and YETP program advisor, she left the alternative school and enrolled in GED preparation program at Portland Community College. She didn't like school any better there, but she hoped to be able to complete sooner.

Four weeks before she planned to take her first GED examination, Elvira discovered that she was pregnant. She dropped out of the GED program, and quit her YETP job. I asked her why she was abandoning her education plans after she had gone through so much trouble and when there were still alternatives open to her. But Elvira didn't have a clear answer: "Just seems like it's all wrong, and nothing's gonna work out anyway, so I might as well quit now."

Like Elvira, most of the case study participants who dropped out of school for personal reasons like pregnancy, parenthood, or family conflicts, had also had problems in school with academic or social adjustment. Lynn Hazelton was skipping school with her friend and failing most of her classes during the semester in which she became pregnant. She stopped going to school altogether soon after her pregnancy was confirmed. Peggy Bromfield says she spent most of the ninth grade "taking drugs out on the hill and skipping classes." She met her husband-to-be during the following summer. By September she was pregnant, and she decided to marry and not go back to school for tenth grade.

Carmeletta DeVries never liked high school much. She got "C"'s and "D"'s in most of her classes. Carmeletta stayed in school for several months after she became pregnant.

> I was goin' most days, but I wasn't doing too good. Then I just got to that point where I was lazy. I didn't want to do nothin'. I was gettin' into so much trouble. My mother told me she's tired of coming up to school for me. And if I wanted to quit, then quit, cuz she's tired of it, you know. So I quit--like a dummy.

Patty Monson left school in the eleventh grade, soon after she realized that she was pregnant. She says she left because "My baby's father was in that school, and he would have given me a bad time. I wasn't getting good grades there anyway." Patty says she never intended to leave school for good. She planned to finish later, after her baby was born.

Two of the young mothers in the case study group stayed in school through most of their pregnancy. They didn't decide to drop out until later, when they had small infants to care for. Genetta Burke liked the maternity school to which she was transferred much better than South Boston High. During the last month of her pregnancy, she was assigned a home tutor. When she felt ready to go back to school, Genetta says that she knew she would have to go back to South Boston. "They didn't register me, and I just didn't feel like goin' through the hassles of tryin' to get registered. Plus I hated goin' to South Boston High anyway." During her pregnancy, Yvette McDermott was enrolled in a special school program in Portland. But she decided not to go back after her baby was born:

> I could have stayed at Continuing Education for Girls. They had a child care where they took, uh, kids who were...They took the students' kids, who were going to that school. But I was just the type of person...I just didn't want anybody keeping my baby but me.

Adam Sledge dropped out of a technical high school in Boston soon after his girlfriend, Cindy, became pregnant. He makes the following comment about his reasons for leaving:

> Last year I liked school a lot. I liked to do Math a lot. I liked everything, all my subjects. Last year I was learning, but this year I wasn't doing nothing. It was just getting to me. Finally I took it upon myself and told my mother, "I'm not going." And she said, "You better go on back there and take care of yourself." But I told her, "I'm tired of waking up every morning just to do a little fighting"...I used to come there every morning, you know, just sit there. And, you know, my girl was having a baby. And I started to say while I'm sitting there I could be out working. So I just stopped going to school. So that was that.

Todd Clinton and Jean Ansel were having problems with their parents and personal lives when they decided to drop out of school. Both of these participants left school at the same time they were leaving home. Jean, at age 15, was ejected from the house by her father because of her heroin addition. But Todd took it upon himself to leave his parents' home, at age 17, after years of struggling with his father. He says, "I left school because I had to get away. Basically, I had just had it with my father, and I couldn't live there anymore. It was either me or them; I had to go." Todd was less than three months away from graduation when he joined the National Guard.

Participant Views on High School Completion

High school graduation is not the answer to all, or even most, manpower problems, but youth employment and training programs rest on the assumption that some type of secondary credential is probably a prerequisite for obtaining adequate employment. Programs offer incentives to encourage young people to complete high school. But do they really need convincing?

All of the continuous school attenders in the YP case study group believed in the importance of a high school education. Several had gone through periods when they considered dropping out of school. Most had never waivered in their intention to graduate. Over half of the high school students in the case study group planned to go on to college--if not immediately after graduation, then sometime in the future. Not all of the continuous attenders viewed high school completion in such glowing terms as Tina Middleton, who said: "High school graduation's like the shining castle--it's the big diploma thing. The way everyone talks about it, you know you have to have one." But all of the continuous attenders were certain, on the basis of what they had read and heard from their families, teachers, and others, that a high school diploma is a necessity if you want to have a good future. The following comments were typical of this group:

> I think it's important, because if you drop out, you won't be getting the necessary education or training to go on to college or to get a job. Because a person can't go onto a job site and be expected to learn things with only a grade school education or even two or three years of high school. That last year probably makes a lot of difference.
>
> Mark Gurney

> I want to graduate and go to college, because I want to become an accountant. I want to make money. Live comfortably.
>
> David Anderson

> My mom and dad have always wanted me to stay in school. They always said it would be worth it. And I really think it will be worth it when I graduate. I plan to get a good job.
>
> Joy Tippets

> My grandmother told me I had to graduate. And I want to for my own reasons. I need an education. I need that diploma in hand, before I can go out and accomplish anything!
>
> Jessica Jackson

Research indicates that young people whose parents attended college are more likely than others to do well in high school and go on to college. Many researchers equate higher educational attainment of parents with the maintenance of home environments that encourage high school completion. The inference is that young people whose parents completed less years of schooling will receive less encouragement at home to complete their own high school education. But among the YP case study group families, parents with low educational attainment were usually strongly committed to higher educational objectives for their children. Within the low income case study group, there were a number of participants, both continuous attenders and dropouts, whose parents' experience with formal education stopped short of high school. These parents tended to use their own experience as an object lesson to spur their children on to further education. Here's what some of the continuous attenders said about the influence that their parents exerted on their education plans:

> My mother's family was always moving from one spot to another. Her father was a logger, and loggers have to move around quite a bit. So she had a hard time getting to school, and sometimes she'd get put back a grade. She said she wanted me to have a better chance than she did. She said she'd like for me to finish college.
>
> Richard Nielsen

> My parents, well, since I was young, they always kinda stressed going to school. They were especially interested in my education, because they have been...both my parents have not been educated well.
>
> Lui Heuyen

> My mother left school to get married, and my father only finished to the seventh grade. He had to work cuz his mother and father had died. He had to help his little brothers and sisters so he had to work. But they always talked to me about my own education. My mamma said, "Make something out of your life. I want you to be happy." As I got older, she would say, "If you finish school, you can be a doctor or a nurse. It's up to you. Just as long as you make something out of yourself. It's all up to you."
>
> Tina Middleton

Within the case study group, there were few differences between dropouts and continuous attenders in regard to their parents' educational backgrounds or the extent to which high school completion was stressed within the family. Among both groups, there were young people whose parents had less than 10th grade educations as well as a few whose fathers or mothers had graduated from college. In general, the parents of dropouts had made it clear to their youngsters that they wanted them to finish high school. Only one difference was apparent in the educational orientation of the dropouts' families compared to that of non-dropouts. While the parents of continuous attenders tended to stress high school completion as a tool for gaining access to college or further training, the parents of dropouts were more apt to promote graduation as an end in itself. The parents of case study participants who dropped out had placed a strong emphasis on high school performance, but most of this emphasis had been focused on simply obtaining a diploma. Most of the dropouts don't remember their parents talking much about the possibility of going to college or about the general benefits of education.

> My mom always used to say, "You gotta graduate, you gotta graduate," and stuff like that..."I'll be so proud of you if you graduate." Yeah, I was going for that all the way up to about 10th grade. Even then, I still wanted to graduate pretty bad, but things started takin' a different course. I started changing my mind, quit school and stuff.
>
> Jack Thrush

> My parents expected us to graduate. They tried to get it into our heads to study, try to do as best you can in school--so you can graduate. We never talked about going to college. I guess I never got to that stage.
>
> Peggy Bromfield

> All my parents ever wanted was for me to graduate. They never said so much about why, but I figgered they were worried. Cuz back then they could just get a job easy, you know, without a degree or whatever, but now it's getting where you got to get something before you can get a job.
>
> Sven Latoka

There were some dropouts in the case study group whose parents wanted them to go on to college. Douglas Giscard remembers that college graduation was stressed the major objective in his middle class home:

> They wanted me to finish college. That was the big thing. They knew I was bright and all. But when they found out I was dropping out of high school, they begged me just to stay until graduation.

Though most dropouts in the case study group knew that their parents wanted them to graduate, and many were convinced that education was an important factor in getting ahead in the world; at the time of leaving school, most of them were too alienated by circumstances in their school or family lives, or too preoccupied with personal crises to seriously consider the possibility that they were jeopardizing their future. Though most had been warned about the trouble in store for them as dropouts, they felt that leaving school was something they had to do.

> My dropping out got a big reaction at home. They all told me I shouldn't have done it--my sisters, my grandma, my dad...I didn't really care what they said at the time. Later I thought about it. And of course they was right. I guess I should've listened.
>
> Carrie Green

> I heard all the bad stuff about dropping out, but I didn't really care about it. I just wanted to get out of school. When I got out and tried to look for a job, it was hard. Now I know better.
>
> Jack Thrush

> Nothin' that anyone told me at the time really got to me, you know? Now I realize that it is hard...it is...tryin' to get a job without an education.
>
> Carmeletta DeVries

> Even at the time, I didn't really feel it was a good choice. But, you know, it was just something I felt I had to do. There wasn't nothing happening with me and my school anymore.
>
> Adam Sledge

Most of the case study dropouts had grown up in homes where personal success was equated with high school graduation. Several admitted that after leaving school, they had to wrestle with their childhood fantasies of graduation night. Dropouts, like Todd Clinton, felt a sense of personal loss over missing an anticipated rite of passage. Three years after leaving school, Todd has completed a GED and obtained occupational credentials as a hair stylist, with help from the YETP program; but he still regrets missing the experience of high school graduation:

> I wanted to be able to say I did it, and no one else in my family could. Since then, I've got diplomas...but there's something there about high school graduation. When you graduate, there's four years of your life, and it's all over with. Now you've gotta go out and make it or break it, you know. When you go up there--with all your friends and all your family--it's just...like...I can't express it. But I never got to feel it, and I never will. I always wanted to do that.

The decision to drop out of school was typically propelled by a sense of desparation or necessity. Most of the case study dropouts viewed this course of action as an immediate solution to their dissatisfactions or personal crises. But they did not believe that in leaving high school they were giving up their only opportunity to get secondary educational credentials. At the time they left school, all of the dropouts in the case study group were aware that GED or other credentials could be obtained outside of regular high school programs. Six of the 20 dropouts said their parents had returned to school as adults to earn high school diplomas or GED certificates. Several participants enrolled in GED programs directly upon leaving regular high schools. Most of the case study dropouts hoped they could get jobs or get by for awhile without further schooling, but the majority planned to obtain a high school certificate or GED credential at some time in the future.

Effects of Dropping Out

What effects does dropping out of high school have on a young person's life? Many of the dropouts in the youth perspectives case study group left school with no specific plans. All experienced some difficulties finding employment and making the adjustment to more adult roles as workers or parents. The period following their departure from school was typically a trying time for these young people. The unmistakable messages of anti-dropout publicity and their own difficulties were enough to convince most dropouts they had made a grave mistake in leaving school early. But can we assume that their lives would have been smoother and their work transition more successful if they had remained in school until graduation?

Taken as a total group, high school graduates seem to have an easier time making a successful transition to adult status in our society. But it is faulty logic to compare the circumstances of all dropouts and all graduates and to conclude that the dropouts could improve their lot simply by remaining in school. Bachman and his associates believe that dropping out is a symptom of other problems rather than a problem in itself:

> The "after only" comparison of dropouts and stayins (sometimes all stayins, including those who go on to college) can be terribly misleading, for the implication is clear that if the potential dropout only stays in school then he can be just like the rest of the graduates. In fact, it simply is not so; by the time he reaches tenth or eleventh grade the potential dropout usually has basic problems that will not be "cured" by another year or two of high school.
>
> Bachman, J. et al, (1971) Dropping Out--Problem or Symptom

In their longitudinal study of a young male sample, YIT researchers found ample evidence that dropping out of school, in itself, did not have the effect of worsening the disadvantages or prospects of those who leave high school before graduation. In regard to dimensions of self-esteem, satisfaction with his own performance, commitment to accepted social values, and rates of delinquency, YIT researchers found that dropouts began high school at a disadvantage. They found nothing to support the view that dropping out caused young men to suffer further harm in these dimensions.

The interview comments of most of the YP case study dropouts indicate that they had feelings of low self-esteem during the time before leaving school. These feelings were typically related to, and exacerbated by, their experiences in school. Some of them saw dropping out of school as a sign of failure, but, paradoxically, it did not seem to make them feel worse about themselves. They may have wished that they were the kind of person who could do better in school, but most felt relieved when they stopped going. The dropouts who found new roles to fill, and were busy being mothers, soldiers, or workers, typically experienced increases in self-esteem as they practiced new skills and discovered new dimensions in themselves.

Not all of the case study dropouts found acceptable new roles when they left school. The experiences of young people like Sandy Bonds, Douglas Giscard, Bobby Jones, and Jean Ansel seem to confirm the popular image of dropouts as people who fail to find jobs, become drifters, and turn to drugs or crime. But it is important to note that each of these young persons started his or her socially unacceptable behavior pattern well before making the decision to drop out of school. It also seems pertinent to note that all of these participants, within several years time, realized that their behavior was self-defeating; and when given an opportunity, they were able to re-channel their energies in more productive and socially acceptable ventures.

Dropping out of high school does not appear to cause a reduction in self-esteem, trigger juvenile delinquency, corrupt values, or otherwise lead to undesirable character changes. But what about its effect on employment and labor market experience? YIT researchers collected data on the employment experiences and wages of dropouts compared to those of high school graduates. They found few short term differences in measures of job satisfaction and earnings.

Those differences that were found tended to be in the favor of dropouts over high school graduates without further training. They did find that unemployment was higher among dropouts, but low family socio-economic level was found to be a stronger factor than the lack of high school diploma in predicting unemployment. Project TALENT results, reported by Combs and Cooley (1968), showed that, in 1964, the employment rates of dropouts and high school graduate controls were quite similar. Project TALENT also found that not only were male dropouts earning as much as the controls, but they had been earning for longer. Thus, economically, the dropouts had a short term advantage over the students who stayed to graduate.

Both Project TALENT and the YIT study followed their sample groups for only a limited period. Consequently, they were not able to draw conclusions about the longer term employment and earning consequences of leaving school before graduation. Other research indicates that dropouts, as a group, experience employment and income disadvantages in their twenties and continue to fare worse than high school graduates over time. Moreover, the unemployment rates of youth in general and dropouts in particular have risen considerably in the years since the Project TALENT and YIT studies were completed. It appears that the use of the high school diploma as an employment screening credential is much more prevalent now than it was even 10 years ago. The tendency of employers to use high school graduation as a prerequisite for hiring may have been accelerated by national anti-dropout campaigns. In any case, it is difficult in today's labor market for any teenager to obtain a permanent job with career attributes.

Despite these circumstances, most of the case study dropouts who actively sought employment were able to find some kind of work. The jobs these young people found typically paid low wages and offered little employment security or opportunity for advancement. Carrie Green lied about her age and got a job in a factory operating a machine for molding plastic. When she was laid off at the factory, she obtained employment as a "salad girl" in a restaurant. Jack Thrush worked as a bell-hop in a large hotel, but he was laid off when they found an older youth to take his place. He had a hard time finding another job but finally found work as a dishwasher.

About half of the young mothers in the case study group found part-time or temporary jobs to augment their welfare checks or their husband's earnings. Peggy Bromfield worked in a garment factory as a seamstress for several months before her second child was born. Yvette McDermott worked as a cashier in a grocery store for a year and a half and in a department store as a stock clerk during the Christmas season. Lynn Hazelton sold flowers on the street and bagged groceries at a Navy commissary. Genetta Burke worked as a receptionist for six months and put in several brief stints as a factory worker.

Several young men were able to get occupational training after leaving school. Sven Latoka's father told him, "If you're not going to go to school, you're definitely going to get a job." He offered to take his son on his construction jobs as a carpenter's helper. Sven worked with his father for nearly two years. He became proficient in basic construction techniques and learned how to use tools effectively and how to price jobs. Harold Thomas went through a six week mechanics training program in the Army Reserves. Todd Clinton earned a third class disc jockey license in the National Guard.

Employed or unemployed, most of the case study dropouts discovered a lot about themselves during the period after they left school. They also learned enough about the world to be dissatisfied with their immediate prospects and to seek out further training, education, or work experience. Some of these young people could probably have been spared considerable hardship if they had been aware of employment and training alternatives earlier or had better access to these opportunities when they left school. But it seems doubtful that their circumstances would have been relatively better had they chosen instead to continue their problematic high school careers.

V. LOOKING AT THE WORLD OF WORK

> I'm not going to be a waitress or some dime store clerk--that's for sure. After I graduate, I want an interesting career. That's why I have to go to college. The good jobs, they're more or less just for college graduates. It used to be that you didn't have to have anything but a high school diploma to get a good job. But there's no way you could do that now. If you don't have more schooling, you might just as well kiss it good-bye. Cuz you won't make it.
>
> Jessica Jackson

> I want a good job...money...security...prestige...the works! But it's gettin' harder to break into the working world. Most of the time they don't want to hire you unless you're 21. Or they say they want experience. But how are you supposed to get it anyway? That's why a lot of kids go to college for a couple years and then go out and get a job. I don't have the money or the grades for that. But if I could get on somewhere... just get someone to give me a chance, I know I could work my way up.
>
> Mark Gurney

When the young people in the case study group talked about what they wanted from life, a "good job" or an "interesting career" was usually at the top of the list. Some of the case study participants were already in the labor force, seeking full-time jobs, when they entered YEDPA programs. Others were looking forward to high school graduation, or even to college enrollment. Most were eager to make the transition from dependent adolescence to full adult status. Their interest in the working world was strong; but their employment experience was limited, and their immediate job prospects were discouraging. Most had little idea how to go about successfully establishing themselves in the full-time labor force.

Though the institutions of childhood--the family and the school--may provide protection, instruction and guidance to help youth develop into productive adults, they typically offer no direct connection to the world of work. The majority of Americans, historically, have learned work roles and developed vocational skills on the job. "Working your way up" is thought of as an American tradition. But entry level jobs with opportunities for training and advancement are not accessible to most teenagers today. Young people, like Mark Gurney and most of the other case study participants, who confront the full-time job market in their teens with 12 years or less of schooling are generally in for a difficult time. An estimated one-quarter to one-third of the young people in our country face major hurdles in making the transition from school to work.

Changing Patterns

The transition from student to full-time labor force participant has traditionally signaled the passage from youth to adult status in society. Prior to the 1950's, formal education for most young people stopped short of high school completion; and while it was typical for those who left school in their teens to work in lower paying, less skilled jobs and to change jobs more frequently than other workers, most were able to achieve at least a toehold in the full-time labor force by age 18. After a period of employment adjustment or military service, young men expected to establish themselves in permanent jobs that would provide the income and security to marry and raise a family. Young women went to work in fewer numbers before World War II, and they were more likely to view employment as a temporary activity. Most female workers expected to leave the labor force by the time their first child was born; and while many returned when their children were in school or grown, as wives, most women workers considered themselves only secondary wage earners.

Labor force participation patterns have changed dramatically in the three decades since 1950. The relative affluence of the post war years allowed middle class parents to prolong childhood for their offspring. Changing parental attitudes toward adolescence combined with technological change, frequent labor surplusses that became chronic with the youth population explosion in the late 1960's, rising educational attainment, and decreasing differentiation of male and female roles have substantially altered the traditional patterns of transition from youth to adult status in our society.

Perhaps the most significant change has been the postponement of full participation in the labor force for the majority of young people. Both young men and young women are spending more years in school. Among middle class youth especially, college, rather than high school graduation, is viewed as the norm. Those who don't go on to four years of college are advised to seek other kinds of schooling or vocational training after high school graduation. Employers, conditioned by prevailing attitudes and proliferating credentials, tend to reserve the kind of entry level jobs that confer adult status for older and better educated youth only.

The circumstances and expectations of young women making the transition to adulthood have changed significantly. Females can no longer be viewed as only secondary wage earners. Young women have increased both their educational attainment and labor force participation. In general, they are marrying later and bearing fewer children. But the number of families headed by young females has expanded dramatically, and more women with small children are choosing to remain in the labor force. Young women today have employment expectations and income needs similar to those of young men, and, increasingly, they expect equality of opportunity and treatment in the labor market.

While the majority of young people, both male and female, are making a later transition to adult status and full labor market participation, the proportion of the youth population that is working has actually increased. This expansion in youth employment is almost wholly accounted for by the rising number of students working in part-time and seasonal jobs. Traditionally, the majority of young people entered the labor force as full-time workers early in life, while the minority who received more education stayed out of the labor force altogether until their schooling was completed. With higher educational attainment, the more privileged minority, historically, entered the working world on advantageous terms. Today, most young people are staying in school longer, and more of them are combining work and schooling.

The jobs held by most young student workers are temporary. "Student" jobs typically have lower skill requirements, offer lower pay, and lack the career attributes of "adult" employment. Such jobs, however, do provide an introduction to the working world, and they enable many young people to remain in school until they secure the credentials and skills that will allow them to compete effectively for entry level adult positions. While many may be discouraged to find that in today's job market their college degrees or years of post-secondary training will afford them access only to the kinds of employment that their parents secured several decades earlier with a good deal less education, most young people who enter the permanent labor force at age 20 to 24 are able to make a fairly smooth and successful transition from part-time student worker to full-time adult employee.

But what about the others--the millions of young people who lack the financial resources, parental support, personal interest, or academic prerequisites to participate effectively in extended schooling? Is there any place in our economy for youth who leave school at age 18 or younger and want, or need, to support themselves with full-time work? In most states, free public education stops with high school graduation at age 17 or 18. For young people who drop out of high school, formal education ends even sooner. Yet studies confirm that the majority of employers do not want to hire young people for regular jobs with substantial training opportunities or career attributes until age 21 or over. Where do out-of-school teenagers go?

Some experience such difficulties in their job search that they become discouraged and leave the labor force altogether. They may rely on the welfare system, particularly if they have dependents to support, or they may get by on the marginal or illegal income they can hustle on the streets. The majority, however, do work. The most ambitious, best educated, most skilled, or luckiest manage to secure the limited number of better jobs available to teenagers entering the labor force. The high school diploma seems to be a necessity for obtaining employment from the relatively few major companies that hire younger workers for entry level jobs with built-in career ladders. Knowledge of the world of work, basic job seeking skills, previous work experience, and vocational training during high school years give some early labor force entrants a competitive edge. Some young people have the additional advantage of being able to establish employment connections through family members or friends who are working. Most youth who leave school at an early age without any of these advantages or attributes experience periods of unemployment before, or in between, finding jobs with limited skill and educational requirements. The jobs they find are usually in the clerical, retail, craft, or service occupations. They typically offer low pay, poor job security, limited training opportunity, and little potential for promotion.

For some teenagers in the labor force, particularly those with high school diplomas, the cycle of dead-end jobs is broken after several years of work experience and with advancing age. Others, who are less successful in building a record of work experience or who lack basic interpersonal, academic, or communication skills, remain trapped in the secondary labor market. They may experience long stints of unemployment and welfare dependency, or they may work steadily but never work their way "up". Without remedial services or outside intervention, these young people face a lifetime of inadequate earnings and unchallenging work.

Pre-YEDPA Employment Experiences

Many participants enter youth employment and training programs with some kind of prior employment experience. In a survey of economically disadvantaged 16 to 19 year olds conducted just before the implementation of the youth incentive entitlement program, researchers found that over half of the respondents had been employed during at least a portion of the previous year. Over 20 percent of those surveyed had held two or more jobs during the year; an additional 37 percent held one job; and only 42 percent had no paid employment during the twelve months before the survey was conducted. Within the Youth Perspectives case study group, most of the 32 participants had some paid employment experience prior to their YEDPA program enrollment. Younger participants and those who were continuous high school attenders were likely to have had less work experience before becoming YEDPA enrollees. Only two case study participants had never worked, or even applied for any kind of job, prior to program enrollment. But a number of others had received their only previous work experience in CETA summer jobs.

Eleven of the case study participants had held CETA summer jobs, which provided them with temporary income and kept them occupied during school vacations. Bobby Jones worked two summers as a kitchen aide in a neighborhood community center. Felisa Santana was a youth counselor at a summertime day camp, operated by a community based organization in Boston. Luanne Clawson was a first aid nurse at a similar camp. The Summer Program for Economically Disadvantaged Youth (SPEDY) gave these case study participants their first introduction to work, but most of the subsidized summer jobs consisted of routine project activities.

As "SPEDY" workers, most of the 11 participants performed only a narrow range of work tasks, received little training and only sporadic supervision, and learned few marketable skills. Luanne Clawson says she spent her summer as a first aid nurse "mostly sitting around and sometimes putting bandages on kids who got hurt." Of all the participants, Genetta Burke had what was probably the most negative SPEDY experience. She was assigned to the Victoria Point Community Center as an arts and crafts aide the summer she was 15. She says the teacher who was supposed to supervise never came all summer. So each day Genetta would walk over to the worksite, sign in, and then go home again.

Unlike Genetta, other participants in summer CETA projects had performed work while on the job. Most of the 11 former SPEDY participants thought the experience was probably worthwhile, but they did not generally consider their summer positions to be "real" jobs. Carmeletta DeVries' description of summer spent as a clerical aide is typical of the impressions with which case study participants seemed to come away from SPEDY experiences:

> I was working at the County Building, but, uh, it wasn't really like a job or anything, you know. They put me down in the basement on the copy machine. Nobody really talked to me much. I would just be down there in the basement, copying all day. I'd either work on the copy machine or sort mail--just real easy things.

Two-thirds of the case study participants had held some kind of non-subsidized job before applying to YEDPA programs. The amount and kinds of employment experience varied widely. While some of the young people, like Sandy Bonds, Linda Larsen, and Patty Monson, had put in only very brief employment stints before becoming participants, others, like Todd Clinton and Sven Latoka, had spent most of the time from age 16 to 18 working. As a group, high school dropouts reported more private sector employment experience than did continuous school attenders. All of those with non-subsidized employment experience had worked in secondary types of jobs, with few skill requirements, low wages, and high turnover. Most had worked only part-time. Few participants had held any one job longer than six months. Several 18 year old dropouts had worked in as many as eight different jobs during the two to three year period before their YEDPA participation.

Young people who had been able to secure jobs working directly with the public, like sales clerk, movie usher, or cashier, generally reported positive feelings about their early work experience. But the majority of jobs held by case study participants were described as uninteresting and tedious. Participants who had worked as fast food handlers, waitresses, bus boys, dishwashers, flower sellers, housekeepers, day laborers, or factory tempo's often felt they had been exploited by their employers. Most said these kinds of jobs taught them a lot about what they didn't want to do and very little about what they could do.

Case study participants said they had not expected to earn high wages in their initial jobs. Most of their pre-YEDPA jobs paid below minimum wage. High school dropouts responsible for their own support were more apt to complain about low wages than were those who lived at home and worked part-time while attending high school. But in rating the quality of pre-YEDPA jobs, most of the case study participants did not seem to consider wage rates as important as some other factors. In general, white collar jobs were more highly rated than blue collar work, and participants placed the highest value on jobs that involved direct contact with the public in a non-menial capacity and a clean working environment. Within the case study group, the handful of continuous school attenders with good academic records, neat appearances, and pleasing personalities had been most successful in securing what were considered "better" part-time jobs. All but one of the participants who had held such jobs were white, female students.

Heidi Clark worked part-time in a movie theatre in California for three months before moving to Portland, and she feels this was a positive experience:

> It was a real nice job. I really liked it. I sold tickets, was a cashier, sold candy, and walked up and down the aisle like an usher. I really enjoyed dealing with the public on that job. It got me out to see what it's like to work with other people and get along with people. I found out I could do that and I enjoyed doing it.

Joy Tippets, a Kalamazoo County participant, had a pre-YEDPA job as a clerk in a dime store in the small town where she lives. Joy also enjoyed working with the public, but she believes her employer took unfair advantage because of her age and lack of experience:

> What I liked best about the dime store was working with people and being around people. You get used to people coming in. You're working at your job, and they come in each week. You have to help people. When I did that, I really knew that I wanted to work with people. It was nice to have people coming in...You could get to know them and help them.
>
> I got the job in the summer. And I got $1.50 an hour, which was okay at first--I was only part-time. I worked all that summer, and I worked all day Saturday and then evenings for over a year and a half. I was the youngest person there. I was a good clerk, but I think they took advantage of me. I had a work schedule like everyone else, but sometimes they would call me at the last minute and tell me I had to come in for an hour or two. I didn't think it was fair cause they didn't do it with the others. Quite often they would call up and say, "We need you here in a half-hour; it's really important!" And you couldn't say no, really, or they'd get upset. So I kept going in on short notice--even when I had something else I wanted to do. After a year, I finally asked for a raise, because I was getting paid less than anyone else. I mentioned it to the boss, but he said because I was part-time, he didn't think he could do it.

Other participants had worked in a variety of less interesting part-time jobs while they were enrolled in high school. Most students said they felt lucky to have secured work that would fit in with their school schedules, but they usually found their early summer and after school jobs to be menial, boring, or unrewarding. Before she left school, Lynn Hazelton bagged groceries and worked as a part-time telephone solicitor. She says, "What I found out is that I don't want to be either of those." Patty Monson and Elvira Taylor both got summer jobs cleaning motel rooms. Patty says, "I knew for sure that I didn't want to spend the rest of my life doing that." Jessica Jackson worked as an orderly at a rest home and as a coat checker in a dance-hall. She says, "I decided pretty quick that I didn't want to do those kinds of work. Too cheap. Too boring."

Participants who dropped out of high school had generally faced even more difficult early employment situations. High school students who found their part-time jobs tedious or unrewarding could console themselves with the prospect of better employment opportunities after graduation from high school or college. But many of the dropouts feared they were facing a lifetime of menial and meaningless work. During the worst period of her alcohol dependency, Jean Ansel worked on the streets as a 16 year old prostitute. While rehabilitating herself, prior to becoming a YETP participant, Jean worked in a discount store and as a waitress. "I got a good idea of what that kind of life is like," Jean reports. "It was bad...terrible, really. And I knew what I didn't want to do in the future." Until he was arrested, Douglas Giscard got his income largely from illegal activities. He also worked briefly as a dishwasher and as a delivery boy before enrolling in YETP. "I saw people who were thirty, thirty-five years old working in those kinds of jobs," Douglas says, "And I knew I didn't want that to happen to me!"

Sven Latoka found himself without a job when his father left the construction business to work on a fishing boat. Sven was trained as a carpenter, but he couldn't find anyone to hire him in this occupation at age 17. During the next year and a half, Sven went through a number of different employment experiences:

> I wanted to work and I needed work. So I was looking for anything, really. I did everything...physical work, washing dishes, pick up papers...I bounced from job to job, but I don't think I was ever out of a job more than a week. Most jobs I just plain got sick of. Fed up with it. Too little pay. Too much work for the money. I couldn't find any job really interesting. Once I went down to a labor pool...on Albany Street, I think it was. They had me out unloading hundred pound sacks of flour off a train for 12 hours straight. I got minimum wage for that, and I've never had as hard a day's work in my life!

When Tien Van Chin came to Portland from a refugee camp in Thailand, he was able to find work almost immediately through contact with other Indochinese refugees. But he wasn't able to find a job that offered any opportunities for advancement. In addition to his age and lack of credentials, Tien faced considerable barriers of language and culture differences. It was a difficult adjustment:

> When I was growing up in my country, I don't have to work. But here I work all the time. I sometimes do, like, dishwasher, car washer, bus boy--things like that. I never keep those jobs long, because I just don't want to be doing that type job. So I quit, to get another. I want better job, but I would end up just with a different job. I realize that if I don't continue my education, I will be unable to get better jobs. I will be always bus boy and stuff like that--always get the menial work. So I don't forget that.

A number of the participants who dropped out of school at age 15, 16, or 17 said that working in a factory fit their early idea of a really good job. Most were unable to obtain this kind of work, because the majority of manufacturers, particularly those whose employees are covered under collective bargaining agreements, do not hire workers under 18. The experiences of the few dropouts who were able to get factory jobs call to mind reports of children exploited in nineteenth century sweatshops.

Carrie Green spent three months working in a plastics factory. She was paid $2.90 an hour. "I thought the money was real good, at the time," Carrie says. "But it wasn't worth it. It was summertime and they had big machines for molding hot plastic. It was a lot of hard work, and it was like a hundred and thirty degrees in there!" Carrie was laid off after she became ill and stayed home from work for a week.

Peggy Bromfield found work in a women's garment factory in Portland when she was 16 years old. She had a five month old son, and she was pregnant when she started work:

> I've always been pretty good at sewing, you know. So I went in to this factory and really caught on quick. I was the best sewer in the factory. After only a few weeks, I was putting out more ponchos than anybody else. They gave me a merit raise, but they said you had to work overtime there or you couldn't keep your job. I was away from Jared, my baby, for fourteen hours every day, and I just couldn't do that. So I quit.
>
> Then I went to work for another sewing factory down the street. I walked four miles a day to get there and back. I told the guy there, "I'm experienced. You pay me $2.75 to start, and I want a raise in a month." But when a month came, he just gave me a line, saying I did this and that wrong and wasn't doing any good. He said he always saw me ripping out all these seams. But, you know,

> everybody always passed their errors to me, cuz I could rip 'em out fast. I'd been doing all these errors for everyone. He knew that too. But he wouldn't give a raise, so I just quit that job.

Lui Hueyen lives with her parents in Portland. Since her father is employed as a tailor, she has been able to attend school instead of working full-time like Tien Van Chin. But, as is common in refugee households, all members of the Heuyen family who are able to work hold at least part-time jobs. Until she secured her CETA job as a computer operator trainee, Lui worked each day after school in a ceramics factory.

> I work as an assembler--not like you stay in one place, but you go and get things from the warehouse. It's a company--mostly Vietnamese there--that sells all kind of ceramics...bowls, decoration, table lamp, ash tray... things like that. I get the orders and go get them down from the shelves. Much lifting. Get the boxes and carry them down. I got $2.65. And condition of place was very bad. As you know, factories and warehouses are usually not very good places to work.

The pre-YEDPA employment experiences of the case study participants can be viewed in a number of different ways. The interview material suggests that some employers discriminate against and exploit younger workers. While only a few of the participants felt they had fulfilled worthwhile roles and learned useful new skills in pre-YEDPA jobs, most were happy to have found employment of any sort at age 15, 16, or 17. The experience of the case study participants indicates that there are still some employment opportunities available for even the very young, if they are diligent in pursuing them. Young workers have historically earned less than older workers and have started out on the bottom of the ladder. But it is also worth noting that not one of the case study participants was able, on his or her own, to secure full-time work that offered much training or opportunity for advancement.

Knowledge of the World of Work

Inexperienced young people have a difficult time getting started in the working world, particularly if they have no knowledge of the range of occupational opportunities, job requirements, hiring practices, and employer expectations that are operative in the labor market. Youth who have little understanding of what's available and no idea of how to prepare or present themselves may never get the opportunity to learn work roles and develop job skills. In their analysis of the labor market experience of 16 to 21 year old non-college graduates (based on data collected in the National Longitudinal Surveys), Parnes and Kohen found that the more a youth knows about the world of work, other things being equal, the smoother the transition to employment and the higher his or her wages and occupational status are likely to be.

Without a realistic understanding of occupational alternatives and related education and training requirements, young people are not likely to make optimal or even workable plans for their own careers. At the time of program enrollment, most of the Youth Perspectives case study participants had very limited knowledge about the world of work. The majority felt that they lacked sufficient information to make really good choices about their own career preparation or employment objectives. The following comments were typical:

- I know that I need to learn a lot more, you know, to be sure what kind of job would be right for me, and to know what I need to do to get ready for it.
- Well, I like to think I could make good choices about my own career, but I really don't think that I know everything that I need to know.
- I've learned some things about the working world, you know, but not necessarily the things I want. I don't have enough information about the things I want.
- I don't really know much about what's out there to do. I haven't planned college or anything. Before I got in the program, I didn't really think about it.
- I haven't worked much yet. I'm not sure of myself, and I'm not sure what I'll work at. I just plain don't know very much about it. I don't know what I could do with myself or what skills I need.

Most of the case study participants believed that the best way to learn more about the working world was to go out and get a job. Participants who had been able to find some kind of work on their own before enrolling in YEDPA programs usually felt that they had more information and a better understanding of basic work roles than most teenagers who hadn't worked. Some participants felt they were more aware and more interested in employment related information because they knew they would have to go to work and support themselves early in life. These young people did not generally believe that their families or schools had really prepared them for labor force participation. But their circumstances had encouraged or required them to find jobs, and they believed that they had learned about the working world by being a part of it:

> I think I know a lot of things from my own job experience. I probably know more than other kids, because I knew that I would be going out and working, supporting myself after graduation. So I was more interested in getting a job. I kinda wanted to learn as I go along. To get my feet wet, and, you know, get the experience that way.
>
> Heidi Clark

> I would say that I know quite a lot. I've worked some, and compared to like most kids in high school, I know more than they do about the world and working.
>
> Carrie Green

> I know about the working world, cuz I've had a harder time finding jobs. From going out and trying to get jobs for myself, and getting several jobs, I know what's a good job and I know what a lousy job is. I know what good pay is and I know what bad pay is.
>
> Sven Latoka

While some participants felt that their own experience had given them a good idea of what it's like to work as well as enough exposure and confidence to be able to get another job of some kind in the future, they also acknowledged a lack of information about the wider range of opportunities in the labor market. The exposure of most of the case study participants to occupational information was haphazard and inadequate for career planning purposes. The majority of participants did not think that school taught them much about analyzing career alternatives or how to prepare for and obtain employment. Their own job experiences typically offered them only a narrow view of occupational roles. The greatest portion of the case study participants said that most of what they knew about career opportunities and requirements, at the time of program enrollment, was learned through casual observation, television viewing, or conversations with friends and relatives.

In his analysis of data from the 1974 National Assessment of Educational Progress survey, Ralph Tyler concluded that most 17 year olds are knowledgeable about some of the features of occupations that they have had the opportunity to observe firsthand or that are depicted in the media but few know much about a wider range of work characteristics or opportunities. During the youth perspectives interviews, case study participants were given a number of different occupational titles, and they were asked to describe the basic job functions each kind of worker would perform, the educational or skill requirements an entry level applicant would probably have to meet, and the amount of pay or other benefits a beginning worker could expect to receive in each type of job. Fewer than half of the participants were able to give a fairly complete and accurate summary of the hiring requirements, wages, and job functions of workers in even very common occupational categories, such as high school teacher, carpenter, clerical worker, assembly line operator, retail clerk, and licensed practical nurse.

Case study participants with little or no employment experience, especially those who were continuous high school attenders, often had particularly vague or inaccurate impressions about occupational roles and requirements. Some underestimated prevailing pay scales for all types of work and apparently believed that most workers earn between $2.85 and $4.00 an hour. Others with limited work experience, including several high school dropouts, had a tendency to overestimate both educational requirements and rates of pay for common types of jobs. When asked how much a licensed practical nurse was likely to earn, Carmeletta DeVries said, "They make the same as grocery checkers, I think...about $20,000 to $21,000 a year." Richard Nielsen believed assembly workers in a large electronics plant near his home in Portland, "probably earn about $18,000--with an associate degree, but if they have a higher degree, they get more." When questioned further about the educational requirements for assembly line work, Richard said: "I'm sure a college education would help you there, because they...I think, they like to have people with a broad knowledge of electronics and how it fits in the world."

Case study participants with previous job experience were likely to have more accurate general occupational knowledge. High school dropouts who had spent a year or more in the labor force were typically knowledgeable about prevailing pay scales and hiring requirements for lower status occupations, but they generally knew less about the requirements or attributes of technical or professional jobs. Interestingly enough, a majority of the case study participants underestimated the income of teachers. A surprising number of both students and dropouts believed that high school teachers earn only minimum wage or slightly above. Whatever else they did or didn't learn in school, most of the case study participants came away from their educational experience convinced that their teachers need a raise.

The public school system attempts to provide students with the academic skills and self-discipline to become productive citizens and workers. Some students receive skill training in high school vocational education programs in addition to academic instruction. But traditionally, the role of the school has not included the transmission of realistic knowledge about the working world in terms of the functions of various economic sectors and institutions, the roles of different people who work in them, and the ways in which an individual can secure employment of different types and achieve personal career objectives. In the past decade, however, many schools have developed career education courses or career information centers to help students learn more about occupational alternatives, explore their own vocational interests and aptitudes, and develop realistic plans for their future work lives.

Nearly half of the case study participants remembered receiving some exposure to occupational information or career planning while enrolled in high school. The kind of exposure reported by these participants varied from a few brochures received in an information counseling session at the school guidance office to participation in a 16 week career education class.

Over one-quarter of the case study participants said there was a career information center in their high school or that they had access, as students, to some kind of career research facility. Eight participants had visited the high school career centers at least once and received instruction on how to use computer terminals or microfische viewers to broaden their knowledge of different career areas. The comments of these case study participants suggest that high school career information centers were viewed more as a novelty than a widely used resource. Most of those with access to such a facility had used it only once or twice in conjunction with specific class requirements. When asked what occupations they had explored, six out of eight indicated that they had only researched career areas in which they had some previous interest and knowledge. Several continuous school attenders in the case study group said they had used the career center as a source of information about colleges and post-secondary training programs. But none of the dropouts who had visited their school career centers as students could remember any specific information they had gained there. As Sandy Bonds said, "How can I remember now? I never really paid attention to that school stuff when I was there."

The handful of case study participants who had been involved in career exploration classes generally had a more vivid memory of their experiences. But while each believed the class that he or she attended had been interesting and worthwhile, their verbal descriptions indicate that they received only a limited exposure to a few different career alternatives. All but one of the six case study participants who received some kind of formal career education in school seemed to focus personal interest on only one occupational area. The timing of career education classes seemed to be a factor in limiting participant learning. Several participants were provided with career education in the ninth grade, before any serious interest in career goals had surfaced. On the other hand, several tenth grade dropouts missed the opportunity for career education, because, at the school they attended, that class was reserved for juniors and seniors only.

Lori Wozisky's ninth grade Vocational English class included a six week unit on the world of work. This unit focused on job search techniques as well as exposure to different work roles. But its impact on Lori was limited:

> We learned how to fill out applications. How to dress. That you shouldn't dress all up to see about a job interview, but you should look decent. Not to put on a show; just be yourself. I remember we filled out lists of what was important to us--like good pay or a pleasant job. Whether you liked working with a small pay, or with a job you completely hated but it had good pay. We had different speakers come out about different jobs. There was a stewardess that came in. A lawyer came in, and a policeman--all different people. It was interesting. I liked the class. But I didn't see anything and say, "Boy, that's what I'd like to do," or anything like that. It was in ninth grade. Before I was really looking. I just thought of being a secretary then.

Patty Monson says that the students in her career education class each got to pick a job that he or she wanted to learn more about. She picked restaurant work:

> They set it up for you to work at a job for a few hours during two weeks. They took me down to this place called Larry's, and I worked in the back room cutting lettuce and making salads. Awwk! By the end of the two weeks, I was going crazy. I decided that I didn't like that at all! But I hadn't really thought of any other kind of work. If it was now, I would've picked an office job.

Vivian Lincoln was a junior in high school during the time she participated in the Youth Perspectives Project. She got the idea of pursuing a medical career through her experience in a ninth grade career education class:

> They taught you different things about, you know, how to act and what it's going to be like, and if it's gonna be hard or not hard. It shows you what career you want to go into and everything. I chose "medical" first to find out about. Then later I thought about business and modeling, but that's just about as far as I got. I went back to medical, cuz I didn't think I'd like the rest of 'em. So now I think I should stick to medical. I looked it up on the machine--I forget what they call it, the occupational something--anyway, I liked what I saw there and everything...It looked like a good profession.

The orientation to the world of work training that some of the young people received in conjunction with YEDPA program participation was more intensive and specific than most school based career education classes seemed to be. In most cases it was focused primarily on the development of job seeking skills, although some participants had the chance to research different occupational alternatives. By the time they became YEDPA participants, most of the young people were interested in their own career futures and eager to gain any knowledge that might help them to improve their employment prospects. About half received some kind of job search or career research training while enrolled as program participants.

> I took the job prep class at the community college. It was part of CETA, but it was an optional thing, and I thought it would be a good thing for me to have. They taught us quite a bit about what the job world is like. How to dress. How to write resumes and cover letters--all that stuff. And how to manage yourself in a way that would be appropriate on different kinds of jobs. We had some good discussions about that.
>
> David Anderson

> We had a workshop where we took aptitude tests and then looked at different kinds of jobs that might fit your abilities and stuff. We talked about the kinds of jobs

> we wanted, and what we were going to be doing to get those jobs and to keep them. And the pay, we talked about how much you could get paid for different kinds of work.
>
> Yvette McDermott

> In Career Research, we took these tests that CETA gives you. They run 'em though the computer, and you get to see what you're likely to be good at...what you like and what you don't. We picked out a couple things that the computer said we were good at and that we also thought we were interested in, and we did research on them. Went out and talked to schools and employers...people in the field...like we were trying to get a job. We found out as much about it as we could before deciding our training.
>
> Peggy Bromfield

> Job Skills was very helpful for me. I learned how to look for a job, ways to prepare yourself for one, and how to write a resume and do a job interview.
>
> Jack Thrush

> I learned a lot from the job survival class. Because I had never realized before what you needed to know just to get a job. Like filling out applications...how you should think of the skills and experience you've had for each different kind of job. Who to talk to when you go see about getting a job. I learned a lot there.
>
> Jean Ansel

To compete effectively in the labor market, young people need comprehensive and accurate information about different job opportunities, employee hiring practices, occupational functions, and potential job rewards that they can then measure against their knowledge of their own employment needs, preferences, capabilities and qualifications. The majority of young people do not develop this kind of knowledge while in school. Most of the case study participants came into YEDPA programs with very limited information about the world of work. Program participation offered these young people an opportunity to try on work roles and develop employee skills. In addition to gaining firsthand knowledge about the working world, some participants received instruction and practice in job search techniques and career planning.

But the case study group experience suggests that there are many participants who leave youth employment and training programs with large gaps in their knowledge of different occupational roles and requirements and their awareness of broader career alternatives. One-third of the case study participants approached YEDPA program completion with no formal exposure to occupational information and no effective career counseling.

What Does It Take to Succeed in the Working World?

Different case study participants had different definitions for what constitutes success in life, but all agreed that a good job is a key element. Some equated employment success with the ability to be independent, or with job security, stability, and enjoyable work. Others felt that high income and status are the most important ingredients in career success. A small number placed highest priority on challenging work that provides the opportunity to learn new things and develop creative abilities. But whatever their criteria for success, nearly all believed that it is getting harder for young people like them to compete in the working world.

The young people in the case study group talked a lot about the "competition". They felt their chances of getting a "good" job were less than those of earlier generations because more people are vying for the jobs that are available. Many agreed with Mark Gurney that lack of experience was the most serious disadvantage that young people had in competing for employment. Richard Nielsen pointed out:

> The competition has grown. There's other people that're more qualified for the good positions. The employers don't want to take a chance on the person without much experience. Most employers won't hire kids. They'll pick someone that already knows how to do the stuff instead of training some kid to do it.

Other case study participants felt that, while lack of experience was a handicap, the major obstacle they faced in getting a good entry-level job was simply age. "Employers don't even want to look at you unless you're 18 to 21 years old," Carrie Green complained. David Anderson agreed that it was becoming harder to get a good start in the working world. He felt that "your chances really depend on how old you are and how much education and experience you have." Most of the dropouts knew from first hand experience that the lack of a high school diploma can be a serious disadvantage in competing for even unskilled work. And a number of participants, like Jessica Jackson, Mark Westgate, and Linda Larsen, felt that completion of, at least, several years of college was a prerequisite for getting a job with career possibilities.

Other participants weren't so sure that even a college education was the answer. Todd Clinton felt that the job market is getting tougher for college graduates too, and he had his own ideas about what was causing the problem and what it would take to solve it:

> I think it's harder than it's ever been. They say it's important to get a college education. But now I see a lot of people who are getting their college educations and going nowhere. Maybe because they don't apply themselves to any specific job, it just doesn't work out for them. As a nation, I think we're in a lot of trouble. We got an over-abundance of people and not enough jobs for them. They ought to come up with something--there's lots of possibilities. If we pulled together as a nation, I think we could get back on our feet. But I don't think we're going to do that, because there's too many individuals, and everybody wants to make a buck off of everybody else. That's where it's at.

Most of the participants believe that their personal circumstances and the conditions that prevail in the outside world will make it difficult for them to get a good start in the working world. Lack of money--to finance education, training, or relocation, or to support themselves while they are learning skills in low paying jobs--is viewed as a major obstacle by many. The unwillingness of employers to hire younger workers, the proliferating demand for credentials, the scarcity of entry level jobs with good training and promotion opportunities, and the accelerating cost of living were all seen as immediate barriers to career establishment. Some of the case study participants were also combatting individual learning deficiencies or facing the barriers of racial or cultural discrimination.

In spite of these barriers, almost all of the participants believed that it would be possible for them to succeed in the working world. Several pointed out that there were resources available now that didn't exist in the past to aid young people in career preparation:

- It's real hard. But there's a lot more opportunities. Like I get all free education. My parents had to pay for theirs. They had to learn it the hard way.

- There's new teaching methods now, better text books, more classes on different subjects...There's just more opportunity to learn things in high school than there used to be.

- They have a lot of special programs now, that they didn't used to have. Like this project and other training programs...There's places where kids who don't go to college can get special help getting ready for a job.

Most of the case study participants felt that the achievement of career success ultimately depends upon their own performance. The majority of the participants believed that they will eventually succeed if they can keep themselves motivated enough to follow through with their education and employment plans. The following kinds of comments were typical within the case study group:

- There's nothing really that stands in my way but myself. Sometimes I just gotta give myself a kick in the butt to get up and do what I have to do.

- The only way I could fail is just by stopping...period. Not goin' to school, not studyin', not doin' what I say I'm gonna do. That's the only thing, really.

- I'll make it if I keep my head together. If I don't lose it. If I work hard and don't get fired from my job.

- Whether you succeed just depends, you know, on yourself. How you do in school, and how you prepare yourself. A lot of people get pregnant, drop out of school, get into drugs...if you can stay away from that stuff, you can make it.

- You have to pick a skill or a goal and then just make up your mind what you have to do and how you're going to do it. I don't think it's so hard if you can do that.

The case study participants thought that experience, skills, education, and age were the most important factors in getting hired for a good job. But they believed that ultimate success in the working world depends more on personal qualities than on credentials or external qualifications. Nearly all of the participants though that inter-personal expertise was the key factor in career success. They agreed that employers are favorably impressed by workers that avoid trouble, follow directions, are dependable, reliable, and able to carry out responsibilities on their own. But beyond this, the participants were convinced that abilities to communicate, tolerate, present a positive image, and interact well with other people are really the most important traits if you want to get ahead in the world. Their comments on this subject are worth reiteration:

> What do you need to succeed? Just knowledge and personality, really. You have to know how to talk to people. You don't really have to have education, I don't think. If you know how to relate to people and, you know, communicate, I think you can get over.
>
> Genetta Burke

> I think you have to be able to put up with a lot of stuff from a lot of different people. That takes determination. And you have to be a "people" person. I don't care what you do, if you're going to get anywhere, you have to like people. You have to get along with people well. You have to be able to relate to other people well.
>
> Todd Clinton

I've learned the hard way that you gotta have the personality to put up with people. You gotta handle the situation, even though sometimes you feel like gettin' so mad and screamin'. You gotta hold that back, you know--that's really part of any job. There's just a lot of things you gotta be tolerant with. You gotta learn how to handle yourself and other people.

Carrie Green

I'd say you gotta be pretty positive and outgoing. You have to be able to reach out to others, make yourself clear, to get what you want. Almost any kind of job, you're gonna have to work with other people. So you have to be able to communicate with them--and put up with them too.

Adam Sledge

VI. EARNING AND LEARNING

> I wanted to work, and this program sounded like a real good idea to me. I want to be ready for life. You know, a lot of kids, they get out of school and they don't know what to do with theirselves--they're lost, really. I know some people don't like the idea of the government running all these programs and stuff. They think it's like a give away thing...you know, like welfare--people just taking money and not doing anything. But we're all working here for the money we get. And we're learning stuff so that we can go out and get a good job when we're done. I couldn't get a decent job without some experience and some training--and that's really what this program's for.
>
> David Anderson

There have always been some young people who have a difficult time getting started in the working world. Finding a job and establishing a productive work life has never been an easy process, but, historically, most American youth have made the transition to adult employment roles without the help of special programs. America has relied on families and schools to prepare her youth for labor force participation; and, for generations, most Americans have been confident that ample employment opportunities exist for those who want to work and are willing to make the effort to find jobs.

The youth population explosion of the 1970's, and the employment problems it spawned, shook this confidence and caused many Americans to question their assumptions. With over 3 million youth unemployed, it became apparent that the economy was not generating enough employment opportunities for all of the young people in the country who wanted to work. It was also clear that families, schools, and other institutions that had traditionally helped young people prepare for adult life were not effectively meeting the employment preparation needs of some segments of the nation's youth population.

David Anderson wasn't alone in thinking that YEDPA programs were a "real good idea". During the 1978-79 school year, nearly a half million young people participated in YEDPA funded employment and training programs. These programs were designed to provide immediate income and work and longer range career development services to young people, especially those from low income households, who would otherwise be unemployed or idle. The magnitude of response from youth applicants was an impressive confirmation of need for these services. But what did program participation actually mean for David and the thousands of other young people who were involved in YEDPA activities?

As a demonstration effort, YEDPA encouraged experimentation. While the majority of YEDPA participants were involved in work experience of some sort, there was no single service model. Program design, delivery mechanisms, and objectives varied widely. The quality of work experience, intensity of training, occupational focus, and career development potential of YEDPA program activities also varied. The experience of 32 case study participants in four local prime sponsor systems clearly does not encompass the full range of variation found in the broad universe of program activities. But their stories can help us to understand what participation meant for some of the young people who were enrolled in these programs. What kind of work did the case study participants do? What did they learn from their jobs and training experiences? What problems did they encounter? In this chapter, we will look at YEDPA activities from a participant's perspective.

Getting Started

How did young people learn about YEDPA programs? What were they looking for when they enrolled? All of the case study participants were interested in working or in finding out more about work when they applied to YEDPA programs. But there were important differences in their circumstances and expectations at the time of enrollment.

Half of the case study participants were enrolled in school when they first heard about YEDPA programs. They learned, from school bulletins or guidance counselors, that part-time jobs were available for low income students. For students, like Lynn Hazelton, Linda Larsen, and Mark Westgate, who needed money and were having a hard time finding part-time work in their communities, the YETP program seemed tailor-made. Their employment concerns were largely immediate; they were looking for income and wanted jobs that were conveniently located and could be flexed with school schedules and other activities. They were not particularly concerned with the type of work they would be doing or with its career development potential.

Several students, like Tina Middleton and Vivian Lincoln thought that a YETP job sounded like an interesting and fun way to earn credit for graduation. But other students in the case study group had longer range interests; they were looking ahead to high school graduation and wanted experience and training before entering the competitive labor force. Richard Nielsen said:

> I felt that since I would be getting out of high school soon, and I would need to get a job and work my way through at least a few years of college, I needed some kind of job related experience. In other words, I thought I'd better get started--find out what it was all about and learn what I could do. This CETA program was supposed to give a person the responsibility and learning experience while on the job, so I thought it would be a wise choice for me.

Some of the case study students, like Lui Heuyen and Joy Tippets, were already working part-time when they heard about the YETP program. But they were not satisfied with their current jobs. They were attracted to the YETP program because it offered better paying work that could be more closely related to their future career interests. Joy said:

> We have a morning announcement at school that the teacher reads. And one morning she read to us about this program for career related jobs. At the time, I was really discouraged about my job at the dime store. I wanted to quit real bad, but I needed the money. This program sounded real interesting to me. I wanted to work when I got out of high school, but I didn't want to just be stuck at the store. I needed some better work experience--something different to give me a better start. So I went into the office and got the application.

Most of the students in the case study group had only a general impression of the kind of work they might be assigned as YETP participants, but Heidi Clark applied to the YETP program with a specific job in mind:

> I read in the school bulletin that there was a part-time opening with the Forest Service. It was a CETA clerical trainee job. I was real interested in working with the environment after I got out of school. I didn't especially want to be a secretary, but I figured if I could get into a big agency like that--get some training and experience--it might work out so that I could stay. Then after graduation, I'd have a job and a chance for more training.

Half of the case study participants were out of school when they heard about YEDPA programs. Some participants who were on their own and unemployed, like Jack Thrush, Carrie Green, and Sandy Bonds, had no alternative sources of income and their financial needs were acute. As high school dropouts with limited work experience, they were having a difficult time finding work. They were looking for full-time jobs when they, more or less, "stumbled" into YEDPA programs.

These out-of-school participants typically viewed YEDPA as an alternative job source rather than as a training or career development program. Carrie Green, Carmeletta DeVries, Jack Thrush, and Sven Latoka heard from friends that CETA agencies had jobs for young people. The application that each of these young people filled out at the CETA office or project agency was one of many work applications they filed. Most of the out-of-school participants were surprised at the responsiveness of YEDPA staffs and were delighted to learn that jobs were actually accessible to them. Sandy Bonds' description of her introduction to Portland's youth career training program illustrates the pre-program perspective of this segment of the case study group:

> Me and Chris had just come to Portland. We were living more or less on the street and had no money. I met this girl. I didn't know anything about her at all; she was

> just a stranger on the street, really. But we started talkin', and I told her we needed a place to work. She suggested we go to CETA. She said it was really a great deal and they do a lot of good things.
>
> We went there and filled out these papers. And we were real shocked when the guy there said he did have some jobs, and he actually asked us what we wanted to do. I was just thinkin' of any kind of work at all. But I started to realize that I could maybe get a better experience here--a better, more dependable job--something I could build around for the future.

Some participants, like Sven Latoka and Jack Thrush, were convinced that YEDPA programs were their best, or only, immediate employment alternative. They were impressed by the relative security of 12 months work at minimum wage, but they were not particularly enthusiastic about becoming program participants. "I wouldn't have come to work here if I'd have known I could get a better job--no way," said Sven. "Cuz this is a learning program. I wasn't real sure what that meant; but I already knew how to work, and I thought it might be too boring." Jack had a similar perspective:

> I just wanted a job. They told me this program was to get you work experience, you know, and some kind of income and maybe finish school and all. I just listened to all that. They said a bunch of things, and I listened to 'em, but I didn't really think much about it. My main objective was just to get a job.

Not all of the out-of-school participants were motivated primarily by immediate income and employment needs. Young people with other employment options or sources of income could afford a longer range perspective. Participants like Yvette McDermott, Patty Monson, and Todd Clinton had specific vocational objectives in mind, and they were interested in training opportunities. Todd turned to the YETP program for financial support after he had quit his construction job and enrolled in cosmetology school. Yvette wanted training so that she could be a key punch operator like her sister-in-law. Patty wanted to become a secretary. She said:

> When Jared was six months old, I figured it was time to start getting ready. I knew I'd have to work, and I wanted to get some experience and some training in a field I liked. When my home study teacher told me about this new CETA program for kids, it sounded just right. I knew there was a chance that the money would get deducted from my welfare, but I still wanted to work part-time and learn some clerical skills.

Finally, there were a handful of case study participants who were neither actively looking for work nor seeking opportunities for training or career development. Participants like Genetta Burke and Bobby Jones did not come into CETA youth offices on their own; they were recruited by project staff. Bobby had been out-of-school and out-of-work for the better part of two years when John Falk, the director of a Boston YIEPP project, called him in to his office:

> John seen me just hangin' round the community center, and I guess he figgered I was wastin' my life. He told me about this program here and sort of urged me to join up. I knew I had to do somethin'--to better myself and get me a little education. This was close to home, and I knew John and everything, so I did it.

Genetta was recruited by Henry Jones, the supervisor of a Boston YCCIP weatherization project that operated out of the Victoria Point housing project. She said:

> I didn't really know Henry well, but I had met him last summer, right? One Sunday, I went over to the store to get a newspaper, and I saw him there. He asked me did I want to get in this program they was openin' up. They was tryin' to hire 18 people, and he asked me did I want to come to the office the next day and sign up. So I just came...because I was tired of sittin' home. I was bored, you know, sittin' home every day doin' nothin'. And I thought that makin' a little extra money that I didn't have, you know, would do me good.

Work Experience

For most of the case study participants, involvement in YEDPA programs included some type of paid employment experience. High school students, like Heidi Clark, Vivian Lincoln, David Anderson, and Mark Westgate, combined part-time YETP jobs with regular school attendance. Students in alternative schools or high school equivalency programs, like Patty Monson and Felisa Santana, also participated in part-time work experience. Most high school dropouts, like Genetta Burke, Sven Latoka, and Douglas Giscard, worked full-time in YCCIP or YETP jobs. Bobby Jones and Luanne Clawson were enrolled in a YIEPP project, which combined educational instruction with part-time work experience. Only three of the 32 case study participants received no work experience while enrolled in YEDPA. (All three were participants in Portland's YETP program, and they received vocational training in institutional settings.) Whether part-time or full-time, work experience was the major program activity for most YEDPA participants; and while many received additional services, like counseling, occupational information, job search training, or remedial education, there were others for whom work experience constituted the sole program service.

What is work experience? In a program context, it can be defined as the temporary placement of an enrollee in a work environment with wage subsidization. Work experience positions can be set up on an individual or project basis. Participants may be integrated with regular (non-subsidized) employees or assigned to work in crews with other program enrollees. Most work experience takes place under the auspices of public or private non-profit agencies. Direct wage subsidies are not generally allowed for workers in private, profit oriented corporations or businesses. The placement of participants in private sector jobs usually requires an OJT contract, whereby employers are reimbursed for some or all of the costs of employing new workers and training them on the job. On-the-job-training constituted only a very small portion of most prime sponsor YEDPA activities, but private sector work experience was encouraged and expanded in prime sponsorships with YIEPP grants.

As a basic youth service model, work experience dates back to the 1960's, when the Neighborhood Youth Corp provided subsidized jobs for both in-school and out-of-school youth. Early work experience programs were criticized by many for their reliance on unchallenging "make-work" job assignments, their lack of training content, and their poor quality supervision. YEDPA mandated improvements in the quality of youth work experience. But long before the legislation was passed, many prime sponsors had begun to upgrade work experience components by selecting job opportunities with more career development potential, focusing job content more on individual training objectives, and exercising more stringent standards for work site supervision. While there are still great variations in the quality and design of CETA youth work experience components, case studies of YEDPA implementation in local prime sponsor systems, directed by the National Council on Employment Policy, show evidence of improvements in the quality of supervision, amount of training content, and career relatedness of youth work experience activities in most regions of the country.

What factors determine quality in work experience activity? Ralph Tyler believes that, from the standpoint of learning the skills, habits, and attitudes important in productive work, the quality of work experience is not a function of setting or job type, but depends instead on the way in which the work situation is perceived by the participant. In his 1976 policy paper on the competencies of youth, Tyler lists a number of criteria that he considers essential for meaningful youth work experience: Does the participant view the situation as one in which he/she can do adult-type meaningful work? Do participants find things they need to learn as they get involved in the work? Do participants perceive what they need to learn clearly enough so that they have goals in mind to achieve? Do the learning tasks appear to participants to be things that they can do successfully? Do they get satisfaction when they carry through the learning tasks successfully, and feedback and encouragement when they don't? Do participants have many opportunities to practice what they learn in actual job functions?

The Youth Perspectives case study material suggests that different participants have different needs in regard to work experience. Some participants enter programs with occupational preferences and objectives already in mind. They may need to develop vocational skills and gain occupationally specific experience. But the majority of participants seem to begin program involvement with no clear career objectives, and research indicates that roughly two-thirds of them will eventually compete for jobs that do not require specialized vocational training. Most of these jobs, however, do require basic inter-personal skills, productive work habits, and a previous record of satisfactory performance, as well as some reading, writing, and computation competence. Participants who enter programs with previous job experience and few basic skill deficiencies may be ready for individually challenging work experience assignments that provide a springboard or direct bridge to career oriented employment. Other participants have little or no previous work experience and substantial behavioral or learning barriers to overcome before full adult-type employment can be considered as a reasonable objective. While some participants function best in work experience placements where job functions, requirements, expectations, and supervision closely parallel those encountered in normal employment situations, others will fail to make a satisfactory adjustment to any work environment without special training, close supervision, and sensitive counseling.

Program Assignments

What kinds of work experience and training opportunities were available to the young people who enrolled in YEDPA programs? How were participant job or training assignments determined? The experience of the 32 case study participants suggests that there was a wide range of variation in the local methods and mechanisms that determined program assignments, as well as substantial differences in the extent to which participants were able to choose assignments on the basis of individualized needs or preferences.

The design of prime sponsor intake and referral systems for YEDPA activities was a critical factor affecting case study participant job assignments and service choices. Portland participants, like Peggy Bromfield, Tien Van Chin, and Douglas Giscard, entered YEDPA programs through a city-wide, consolidated intake and referral system. They went through a brief counseling and career research process that helped them to focus on occupational objectives and employment and training needs before being assigned to service components or worksites. These participants had access to a range of different training, education, and work experience options. Their income needs, career interests, immediate employment objectives, and personal circumstances were taken into consideration before they were placed in projects, training components, or individualized work experience assignments.

Peggy Bromfield was interested in physical therapy. She had no previous training in this field and her only prior work experience was as a sewing machine operator in a garment factory. She was placed in a medical careers exploration project, which provided exposure to a hospital environment, an opportunity to learn about different medical occupations, and work experience and training in physical therapy techniques.

Tien Van Chin had worked in a variety of low-skill, low-paying jobs. He was looking for a way to break out of the secondary labor market. Tien decided that training in computer programming would enable him to compete for a better paying job, that would provide him with adequate financial support to pursue a university education on a part-time basis. Tien was placed in a 12 month computer programming course at a private business college. His tuition was paid through the YETP program, and he was given a training stipend.

Douglas Giscard needed a full-time job. He wanted to work with people and was interested in launching a career. But he had little prior work experience and no high school degree. Douglas was placed in a full-time work experience position at a community based, youth service agency. He was also enrolled in a GED instruction program.

In each of the four prime sponsorships, high school students who were seeking only part-time work typically had a narrower range of choice in regard to work and training options. Some students, like Heidi Clark and Vivian Lincoln, were able to make a good match between their individual career interests and the work experience opportunities that were available to them. Vivian was considering a career in medicine, and she chose a work experience assignment at a hospital near her school. Heidi was able to secure a part-time position at the U.S. Forest Service, which she hoped would further her progress toward a career in environmental management. All of the case study students were allowed some choice regarding job assignment, but individual career objectives were not necessarily the primary criteria governing work experience placement. Richard Nielsen's experience illustrates the circumstances that seemed to influence job assignment for many students:

> I didn't have anything particular in mind that I wanted. My counselor said that they could give me something that was in their CETA job files. Most of the jobs were like, maintenance type work...secretarial jobs...warehouse type jobs. I didn't care. Mainly, I didn't want anything too far from school. And I wanted it close to my apartment, because I don't have a car or anything. So I picked out a few of the janitorial or maintenance jobs that were nearby. I think I had two interviews before I got hired on as a janitorial assistant down at the senior citizens center.

Transportation considerations were a key factor in participant job assignment, particularly in the rural areas of Kitsap or Kalamazoo counties, that had little or no public transportation. Proximity of the worksite was a major criteria in the placement of case study participants who attended high school, GED instruction classes, or YIEPP educational components on a daily basis. Nine of the 18 case study participants who were enrolled in daytime school programs were given part-time jobs within the same facility where they attended classes. Most of the other students worked in public or private non-profit agencies located on bus routes or within walking distance of their schools. Though a number of the case study students worked as medical, educational, or social service aides, clerical and janitorial jobs were the kind of part-time work most often provided by schools and other non-profit agencies.

Some participants, like Mark Gurney, had career interests that could not be readily linked with locally available work experience options. Mark was initially placed in janitorial work at his high school. He grew dissatisfied with this job after several months and requested another work assignment. Mark wanted experience and training in retail management, surveying, or graphic design, but his CETA counselor was not able to develop a part-time job that would meet any of these interests, within the limited range of worksites available in the small, rural community of Rexburg. Mark tried out an audio-visual assignment at the local community center. But he decided to leave, because the agency was not able to provide training or adequate supervision, and he wasn't able to handle the work on his own. Mark was finally given a daycare aide assignment at the community center.

While several case study participants had occupational interests that could not be linked to existing work experience opportunities, others had no career goals or particular job preferences when they entered YEDPA programs. Some participants, like Carmeletta DeVries and Jack Thrush, said they "just wanted any kind of job", and these participants were typically given less challenging job assignments. Here's how Jack Thrush described his job assignment:

> I had a little bit of experience in janitorial work. So that's more or less what I told 'em I'd like to do. The first job interview they could line up for me was a maintenance job. I went to the first interview, and when they offered me the job, I took it.

Case study participants who had a good idea of what they wanted from YEDPA work experience were most likely to get a satisfactory job placement. Patty Monson wanted clerical experience and training in an office environment. She turned down the first work experience assignment that was offered to her:

> They set up an interview for me at the courthouse. It was in the license plate division. I felt really strange, turning it down, but I didn't think it would be any good. I was just going to be sitting at this one little desk, sorting license plates all day. They said maybe in a few weeks I could sometimes work on the phones. The reason I went to CETA was to get experience...to learn different skills. I couldn't see how this would help me for the future at all. I didn't know what to do at first. But I explained it to my counselor, and she agreed with me. She helped me get a much better job at Grant Elementary School--one where I'd be doing all different secretarial type things.

The case study participants who had the least control over the determination of their work experience assignments were young people from Boston who applied directly to YCCIP project operators. The job functions and training activities for these projects were pre-established, and the only choice that the participants had was whether or not to enroll. While participants from

Portland and Kalamazoo, like Sandy Bonds, Peggy Bromfield, and Carrie Green, chose project jobs from a variety of prime sponsor employment and training options, Boston participants, like Genetta Burke, Adam Sledge, and Sven Latoka, were typically not aware of the other employment and training options that were available in their area.

Whatever their job assignment, only a minority of the case study participants had the skills or experience to function from the beginning as full fledged workers. Participants were placed in YEDPA positions to receive work orientation and training as well as job experience. How well did different work experience assignments meet developmental objectives? Were participants able to define appropriate learning objectives and accomplish meaningful work? Let's examine the experiences of case study participants in different types of jobs.

Clerical Work

Clerical jobs accounted for the largest number of work experience placements within the case study group. Ten of the 32 participants were placed in full or part-time clerical trainee positions. All but one of these participants were young women. Only half of the female case study participants received initial placement in non-clerical work experience. While some people may be uncomfortable with the reinforcement of occupational sexual stereotyping implied by the assignment of young women to clerical work, it is apparent that these job assignments are viewed by many female participants as highly desirable. Many of the female case study participants had been enrolled in high school business courses, and they wanted a chance to practice the secretarial skills that were introduced in school. Office environments were generally viewed as pleasant places to work in comparison with other alternatives. A variety of clerical jobs are accessible to entry level workers, and even limited experience in clerical work can serve as a basis for full-time employment after high school graduation.

A number of case study participants said they liked their clerical jobs because the tasks were diversified and they had the opportunity to fit into a "real" working environment. Patty Monson and Joy Tippits, who were both assigned to work in school offices, offered the following comments about their part-time jobs as clerical aides:

- I like my job very, very much, because I'm never bored with it. I always have different things to do. I don't sit and do the same thing every day. I could never work on an assembly line cause it's, you know, the same thing every day. Here I do different things, all day long, every day. It keeps me interested...I type memos and announcements. Sometimes I type up dittos for the teachers to use in class. I go to the district office to use the laminating machine. During lunch I work at the desk, giving kids lunch money and recording the charges. The thing I probably like least is working in the library.

> It's boring there. I don't like to be bored, cause the time drags on. When I'm interested in something, the time flies. I like to be kept interested...I feel that I'm learning all that I would have to do in this kind of job situation...working in a school...It might be a lot different, you know, in a school than anywhere else. But I'm still learning a lot of different types of things. If I didn't think it was preparing me for a real job, I probably wouldn't stay at it.

- I feel I'm learning how an office really works. That's the best part of this job, I think...You know, seeing how the office works and the routine of it all. And I really like the people I work with. I've learned a lot from them...about the job and about how they see the world too. The people that I work with I knew from when I went to junior high, and they are really understanding. I like it all...typing, filing, running things off, or doing stuff for the teachers. The only thing that's been sort of bad is handling phone calls from the parents. Sometimes they're upset, and they are really rude. That was shocking at first.

While most clerical aides liked their work experience positions and felt they were learning useful skills, several participants said they grew bored with routine secretarial tasks and would rather have worked in some other occupational area. As a SPEDY participant, Lori Wozisky spent three consecutive summers doing clerical work in the high school office. She was assigned to the same worksite and job functions as a YETP participant. After four months, Lori left her YETP clerical job to work as a cashier at a nearby Jiffy Market. Lori says:

> When I first started working as a clerical aide, it was a lot of fun. I felt so grown up, and I really liked it. But after three years, I guess it just got boring...I did get more responsibilities over the time I worked there, and I got better at my job. But I was still answering the phone, filing--things like that. And typing! I did lots of typing. I don't like it. Once I had it as a class in school, I didn't like typing anymore...I was planning on being a secretary, right up 'til this year. But I don't know. It seems the more clerical work I did, the more I disliked it. I got to where when it was time to go to work, I didn't even want to. I didn't want to go in and sit at that desk. Just to look at those same four walls and type and things like that. It was too boring. I don't like to sit around. I like to be active. The job I've got now, that keeps me running.

Lori Wozisky could have requested another job assignment, but she felt her choices as a YETP participant were pretty much limited to office work, daycare, or social service aide--none of which held much interest for her. Since she was 18 and close to high school graduation, she decided to try her luck in the regular labor force. Her new job paid minimum wage and required 35 to 40 hours work per week--a difficult schedule to coordinate with high school attendance.

Maintenance and Janitorial Work

Some jobs are intrinsically more mundane than others and are viewed by most participants as less desirable work assignments. Of the six participants originally assigned to routine janitorial, maintenance, or clean-up jobs, two requested and received alternative job assignments, and one eventually dropped out of the program. All of the case study participants who worked as janitorial or maintenance aides were young men. While these participants were more apt than most to describe their jobs as boring, not all of them viewed their work in negative terms.

Richard Nielsen received his first work experience as a janitorial aide in a community based agency. For six months he swept floors, cleaned offices, hauled trash, stored supplies, sorted mail, and replaced light bulbs and worn fuses and did other minor repairs. Richard says he liked his YETP job because it was the "first time that other people really counted on me for anything." He feels he learned a lot from watching the people around him work. His supervisor encouraged him to enroll in community college after high school completion. When he left the program, Richard was able to find a job as a janitorial assistant for a private company.

David Anderson, who was assigned to part-time work at his high school bus garage, liked some things about his job as an automotive maintenance aide and disliked others. But, overall, he found it to be a positive experience:

> Most days I do greasing, airing tires, checking cables... stuff like that. When times get slow I clean up the shop, wash down jacks, floors, windows, cars and buses. There's some things I dont like about the job, but a lot more things that I do like. Sweeping floors and washing windows don't really turn me on that much. But I do that on the average only about a half-an-hour to an hour a day. Um, I like working with my hands. And up there I do a lot of working with my hands. I like working with people too--not a whole lot of people, though--and this has given me a chance to know more people. I really get to know who I'm working with and how they feel about different subjects, cuz during coffee breaks we can talk and stuff like that. I get to learn to be a mechanic. I can watch them and learn from what they're doing. And I can go out and do it for myself and learn from that too... learn from the mistakes that I make.

Weatherization and Construction Work

Building weatherization, repair, and construction activities constituted the third largest occupational grouping for case study participants involved in work experience. Five participants, two of them young women, were enrolled in special projects that provided worksite experience and instruction in basic repair, winterization, or carpentry skills. The exposure of youth participants to building trades is generally accomplished under a project format, where participants work in crews with close supervision and receive related instruction either on the job or in classroom settings. The value that such activities held for case study participants seemed to depend upon the relative quality of supervision and amount of training emphasis in individual projects as well as the kinds of expectations and career objectives with which participants, themselves, entered the project. (Some of the problems and limitations peculiar to the project approach are discussed later in this chapter.) All of the participants who were involved in construction related projects were high school dropouts. All worked on the projects full-time, or close to full-time, and they tended to view these jobs first as immediate sources of income and only secondarily as the means for developing skills to enhance future employability.

Each of the young men involved in construction related work entered the project with some skills and previous experience. Harold Thomas, who viewed his YCCIP job as a way to earn money while completing his GED, said that his three month stint in home weatherization project taught him few new skills. He found the work to be "really boring". But Adam Sledge, who was enrolled in the same weatherization project, found the work interesting and hopes that his YCCIP work experience will lead to regular employment in the home weatherization and construction business. Adam had helped his mother to remodel the family apartment, and he says that he did not find it difficult to perform tasks like insulating walls and ceilings, wrapping pipes and water heaters, weather stripping and repairing windows and doors, and doing other weatherizing functions. He enjoyed his work on the project and feels he has learned "at least some new things."

Sven Latoka was more skilled in construction techniques than most of the other participants on the YCCIP renovation in which he enrolled. Only three weeks after joining, he was made a project crew leader. Though Sven was initially not enthusiastic about being a "program participant", as his termination date drew near, Sven said:

> I like most things about this project. And I have learned new things. With my dad, it was mostly small remodel jobs. But here we're doing renovation on public buildings. I've learned how to put up inside walls, how to read blueprints, and more about estimating materials for jobs and stuff like that. I expect to do regular construction work when I get through here.

Sandy Bonds was enrolled in a home repair project operated by Portland Public Schools. Though Sandy had no career goals and very little experience when she entered the YETP program, she opted for participation in the home repair project because she thought that construction work "sounded interesting" and she needed a full-time job. Five months after enrollment, Sandy was enthusiastic about what she was learning from her project job:

> This is almost the first time I've worked really. Other things have been like babysitting, or a little while at McDonalds or something. It's the first real job I've had, and I like it a lot...Right now I'm working sheet rock and concrete. I've worked linoleum, formica, and, uh, roofing. They have five crews here who do general carpentry. One crew does mostly roofing. Another does mostly little things, like putting guard rails in an elderly person's home, adjusting the house for them so they can get around better...I learn so much every day. It kind of gives me a sense of responsibility, when someone says, "Go do this," and I can do it!

Hospital Work

Four case study participants were assigned to health care aide positions in hospitals. All of these participants agreed that hospitals were good places to observe workers filling different professional roles and to learn about life in general. But there were considerable differences in the job tasks and learning potential of hospital-based work experience positions. The job activities of those working in hosptials ranged from part-time work as an orderly to full-time participation in a six month program that included medical career exploration and intensive training and experience in physical therapy.

Vivian Lincoln's YETP job as a hospital aide is the first work experience she's ever had. She works ten hours each week, splitting her time between Saturdays and Sundays. Vivian says that she likes everything about her job, which includes a number of different tasks:

> I take care of the babies. I take their picture. Put on the little camera and take the pictures. I ask the mother if she wants to buy a packet. If she wants a packet, you explain the procedure and everything and tell her there's no obligation. All that takes 'til about 11:30. Then after that there's discharges. You help discharge patients from the hospital, wheel them down to the car, and take the wheelchair back. That takes 'til about 12:00. Then you work at the admitting desk--with paper work--stamping discharge on the papers and taking the names off the bedboard and things like that. That's to about 1:00. After lunch you come back

> and make charts. Maybe you make about 150 of those. Then you go upstairs to admitting and help people there or go visit patients. The part I like best is visiting the children in Pediatrics.
>
> My job is health care and working with people. At first I didn't understand some of the people there, but now I do. There's a lot of pressure there, and you learn to take orders and things like that. Doctors, patients, their families, all of them are under pressure. Sometimes people treat you really bad, and you might not understand why they do that. But when you work in the place and see how they're run around and everything, then you understand why they get like that.

Jessica Jackson worked as a part-time health aide in a Kitsap County hospital. Jessica said her daily tasks were: "getting records, answering the phone, taking down messages, getting lab results, mounting EKG's, taking them out of the wards, and copying them." When asked if she ever grew bored with these tasks, Jessica said:

> Uh uh. I just keep trying to do it better and faster. You can never get to the point where you've got this procedure down pat. Never. Like mounting an EKG--everyone thinks it's easy. Running it, I've got down pat, but mounting it is a different story. It's easy to get the little things upside down. I have to watch what I'm doing...Last week I got to observe an operation. Watching it was interesting, but it made me sure I don't want to be a nurse or a doctor. I wanted this job to help me decide if I want to go into the medical field or if I want to work with people in another way, like maybe social work. Working with the people around me has been the best part. I really like my co-workers. And the patients...I get acquainted with a lot of older people. It's helped me to realize that I can really accomplish something and I'm good at working with people.

Lynn Hazelton works at the same hospital as Jessica Jackson. Lynn thinks she might like to be a nurse someday, and she hoped her part-time YETP job would give her some nursing experience. She likes her job, but much of her time seems to be spent doing menial work. Lynn thinks that some of the regular hospital staff leave the more tedious tasks for her because she is a "CETA" worker:

> I make beds a lot. Usually I'm pretty fortunate and don't have to empty bedpans. It's really strange...the first few days that I worked there, I emptied all kinds of bedpans. But since then I've only emptied two or three of 'em. I make coffee. I pass out water, and pass the trays,

> and a lot of stuff like that. Oh, sometimes I run errands, go to the laboratory and stuff...One thing that really bothers me is if that day shift leave their beds for me to do. It kind of makes me mad.

Jobs With Career Potential

Through individually developed work experience placements, some case study participants were able to learn job roles that would have otherwise been inaccessible to them. As a YETP participant, Lui Hueyen was able to leave her part-time job in a ceramics factory. Lui is a good student, who excels in mathematics. She wanted challenging part-time work that would help her to develop marketable skills but was unable to find this kind of job on her own. With the help of her school work experience counselor, Lui secured a YETP position in the computer center of a U.S. Forest Service facility. After several weeks of intensive training, she was able to function as a regular worker, programming and correcting data files.

When Jean Ansel became a YETP participant, she knew what kind of work she wanted to do, but she had no idea how she could actually get started. Jean learned how to "sign" for the deaf from a friend when she was still in junior high school. She wanted to work with handicapped children, and she was interested in using her signing skills. But, as a 17 year old ninth grade dropout and rehabilitated heroin addict with limited work experience, Jean was not a likely candidate for a responsible position. Shortly after being accepted in the YETP program, Jean heard about a public school in Portland that was being established to provide education services for handicapped children. Teachers had been hired for the program, but few had the skills to communicate with deaf pupils. Jean did not meet the school's qualifications for a regular position. But, at the request of her counselor, school officials were willing to take on a "free" YETP worker who knew how to sign.

Jean was not sure what her role was supposed to be at the school. At first she had a hard time fitting in. But she was eager to work, and her signing skills were in great demand. Within weeks, she was filling the role of a teaching assistant, working directly with deaf children in the classroom. While involved in full-time work experience, Jean was able to pass her GED examinations and complete several community college courses in rehabilitation and special education. Ten months after she started her work experience, there was a job opening at the school, and Jean was hired as a regular teaching aide. She was elated with her success:

> You can't imagine how proud I was! It was great to be able to tell my family and friends, "I'm really working now." Some of my friends had high school diplomas and they weren't working. But even though I had dropped out and had so many problems, I was able to get this really good job. I was proud of myself, cuz I knew that I had really worked for it.

Several case study participants were able to turn routine work assignments into challenging, individualized jobs. Douglas Giscard had developed few legitimate job skills before he was assigned to a community agency that provides services for runaways and other juveniles living away from their parents. His job there was to provide clerical support to the counseling staff. Douglas says that whenever he finished his work, he would talk to his supervisor and other staff members and find out what else needed to be done. He soon proved himself to be a valuable asset in the office. After four months, Douglas was put in charge of coordinating the youth volunteers who serve as support staff for the agency. In his new role, Douglas makes up the weekly assignment sheets that detail each volunteer worker's function. He also supervises the juvenile workers, handles any problems they might have, and acts as liaison between the professional and volunteer support staff. Douglas clearly enjoys his work and he does it well. He was promised a permanent placement when he terminated from the YETP program.

When Felisa Santana enrolled in a bilingual community based school, at age 15, her only previous job experience was part-time agricultural work in Puerto Rico. After attending the school for several months, Felisa was placed in a YETP clerical position at a nearby neighborhood health clinic. She had no clerical training and few skills that could be put to use in an office environment. During the first few weeks on the job, Felisa says that she had a hard time handling even the routine filing work to which she was assigned. But the secretaries and medical assistants at the clinic were friendly and willing to work with Felisa while she learned. Felisa developed many practical skills during the 18 months that she worked part-time as a YETP aide at the clinic. She took typing and bookkeeping at school, and her job at the clinic was expanded to include new functions. By the time she passed her GED examinations, Felisa was handling much of the clinic's billing and account work. She was offered, and accepted, a full-time job at the clinic as a billing clerk.

Heidi Clark also started out as a part-time clerical aide. As a high school junior, she was placed in a work experience position at the U.S. Forest Service. Heidi had some office skills when she started her YETP job, and she was interested in career training because she didn't plan to go on to college after graduation. At first Heidi felt that she wasn't being fully utilized at the Forest Service:

> It started out real...well, it was pretty slow at first. I was doing a lot of typing, but it was mainly practice stuff. I was pretty confident of my skills. One of the things I realized was that I could keep up with the other typists, and I was also learning about their style of form letters. I had learned form letters in school, but they were different. So I studied up on the different styles and way of doing things in the government...reading manuals and things like that. So that was okay...I needed to learn those things. As time went on, it got to be more friendly and comfortable around the office

> for me. And they started giving me other things to do, and I got to have more responsibilities. That went on for nearly a year, and I enjoyed my job. But towards the end of that time, I started to feel kind of like, "I'm not doing a whole lot here. I'm still just sorta doing little jobs." I felt like I could handle other kinds of work.

Heidi finally talked to her supervisor about the way she was feeling. They discussed her progress as a clerical aide, and her supervisor agreed that she was ready for a more demanding assignment. On the recommendation of her supervisor, Heidi was hired by the Forst Service as a public information trainee. She was allowed to work part-time for three months while she completed high school and was promised full-time employment and career training after graduation. This is what Heidi says about her new job:

> I really like it here. The job that I have now is different from the CETA job I had, because in this job, there's a lot more different things to do. I feel I've got a lot more responsiblity. I don't really do very much typing now. I read and respond to letters from the public, asking questions about the Forest Service. I answer questions, send out information, maps, and things like that. I do some xeroxing and typing. I also answer phones, and I greet the public coming into the office. We're always trying new things in the office. In my job, I have to be really up on what's going on, cuz the public thinks that we know it all--so I try to know as much as I can.

Non-Traditional Work Experience for Female Participants

The majority of young women who enroll in youth programs and projects receive work experience and training in occupational areas that have traditionally employed high percentages of women workers. Job openings in service occupations, like clerical worker, beautician, food service worker, social service, medical, or dental aide, are fairly plentiful and can often be accessed with relatively little advanced training. But jobs in traditional "women's" occupations typically pay considerably less, and may offer fewer opportunities for advancement and self-sufficiency, than other occupational roles that have been more heavily identified with male workers. CETA prime sponsors have been countenanced by national directives to provide non-traditional training opportunities for women and to encourage female participants to prepare themselves for better paying jobs in occupational fields that are currently male-dominated. Three of the young women in the youth perspectives case study group received work experience that was physically intensive and involved the development of skills or capabilities usually associated with male workers. What were their reasons for choosing non-traditional work assignments?

When Sandy Bonds started working on the home repair project, she had no firm career goals in mind, but she was hoping for "good experience" that she could "build around" for the future. After working several months on the project, Sandy grew interested in becoming a carpenter. As a young woman, who weighs less than 100 pounds, Sandy realized that she might encounter serious barriers in realizing her occupational goals. Sandy considers herself a feminist, but she doesn't think that she really has a need to "prove" anything on the job:

> I took a chance, really, with this job. I was interested in it, but I took a chance at the same time...You know, on jobs sometimes people just get carried away with themselves...start testing the people around them. I don't like being in a little game--some trip around, "I'm bigger than you are and stronger than you are"--that just bothers me. I don't know why people want to do that. There's no reason for it. If he's a man, he's a man. If she's a woman, she's a woman. You don't have to prove that to anyone, we already know that. A lot of people feel they have to prove themselves, but there's no reason to do that.
>
> I don't like offending people at all. I try not to. But I don't like holding myself back either. So if I have to prove something, I...well, I try to do it in the nicest way I can. I'm not trying to show anybody anything, but if they want to see it like that, fine. If it's a matter of doing good work, that's fine too. I'll show it to 'em if I know that I can do it.

Genetta Burke did not select her weatherization project work from a spectrum of training or work experience opportunities; she was recruited by project staff. When the project supervisor, Henry Jones, first told Genetta about the weatherization work, she was not particularly interested. Genetta said: "It didn't sound much like *me*. But I'd already tried workin' in an office and in a factory; and I needed to be doin' something, so I figured, why not give it a try?" Her decision to participate in the project was partially motivated by the desire to prove that she could handle a male oriented job:

> You know how men are always acting so tough? Well, I just wanted to show them that I could do *their* work. When I first came here, they be sayin', "uh, uh, look at her! She *think* she can do it." I say, "Yeah, you *know* I can!" Cuz when you takin' out the windows and stuff--you know, like takin' the frames loose and puttin' 'em back together--cuttin' glass for 'em and stuff... They didn't *think* I could do it. But now they *see* me do it.

When Tina Middleton signed up for part-time work on a YCCIP fisheries project, she had no idea that the job would involve strenuous physical labor on an all-male work crew. Compared to some of the other female participants in the case study group, Tina is particularly "girlish" and rather shy. She had no intention of launching a non-traditional career when she accepted the position at the state operated fish hatchery in Kitsap County:

> I'm interested in animals. I'd really like to be a zoo technician, but there's not much call for that around here. When I heard from my counselor about the job at the fish hatchery, I thought, "Marine biology's a good field; I'd really like to have a job like that." So I took that assignment. But it didn't work out like I expected. I had no idea that the work would be so *hard*, or so boring. I thought that I would be working in the lab there. I took advanced zoology, and I was really good in the lab portion--dissections and things. That's what I *thought* I was getting into at the fisheries.

As young men are growing up, many of them learn to use tools and tackle basic construction projects or household maintenance chores. Young women are much less likely to become involved in such activities. None of the three female participants knew much about basic construction techniques or how to effectively use even common tools at the time she began non-traditional work experience. How difficult is it for a young woman to learn to function effectively in an unfamiliar work environment? The experience of these three women indicates that the quality of initial training and the supportiveness of the supervisor can make a big difference in a female participant's ability to adjust to new work roles.

Both Sandy Bonds and Genetta Burke were able to learn new skills and techniques in a relatively supportive environment. Genetta says, "The way they taught us, it was rather easy, you know. Because they took the time to show us, and they had patience. They got different people to teach us things and show us how to do it." Sandy found the adjustment period trying, but she feels that her instructors did a good job:

> It was pretty confusing at first. The work, itself, is not so hard, but learning how to do it right is what's hard. I doubt if you could pick somebody up off the street and ask them to hammer a nail and they would do it right--without bending the nail. There's a little technique to everything we learned. The first instructor I had was a woman. She was kinda new to the whole thing and she was kinda learning along with us. She was a good instructor, though. The second was an older man, and he was really super good. He had us do classwork. We were the only crew that did it, because he wanted us to learn vocabulary. Because, like, we would be working along and he would ask somebody to get him a jack plate.

> And we would turn around and look at him and say, "What's a jack plate?" So finally, he said, "Look, I'm making this vocabulary list for you. This is what you've got to learn to do the job. You have to know what things are first, that's pretty clear." So that's what he did, and it turned out to be real good.

Tina Middleton's fisheries job was mainly routine physical work. Though her job required less technical skill than either Sandy's or Genetta's job, Tina had a much harder time adjusting to the work requirements. Her adjustment problems were compounded by a personal lack of interest in the work and an unsympathetic supervisor, who "didn't really want women on his crew." Tina's supervisor was not willing to provide her with much in the way of orientation:

> One day, when I was still new there, he just really went for me. See there was this valve--it's called a low gauge, shut-off valve. And I'd only heard this term maybe once at the time. I just remembered that it was a valve, but not what kind of valve. Anyway, it was lost. Ron was looking for it, and I found it. And I say, "Hey, Ron, I found this valve thing." He goes, "What kind of valve do you mean?" He knew just what I meant all right. I said, "It's the valve you wanted. I don't know what kind." And he got really mad. He said maybe I should go home and read the Sears Roebuck catalogue before I came back to work so that I would be more aware of these things. That just hit the wrong nerve with me, but I just walked away.
>
> Later that day, I hit my finger on a nail, and it really hurt. When it happened, I said, "Ow! My fingernail!" Ron was standing behind me and he went, "Ooooh! My fingernail!" Then he said, "Stop worrying about your fingernails and get to work!" I felt madder than ever. At first I thought maybe it was just his bad day. But he did it all the time after that.
>
> One day I was talking to someone else on the crew, and I said something about "fishies". We were working with fingerlings, and I don't know why, but I just called them "fishies". Ron heard me and he said, "Fishies! That's a feministic term. You're not going to get by with that on my crew. Try that one out on someone else, Tina." I stomped off. I was embarrassed, and I was pouting. Ron was laughing at me, and I said, "Well, excuse me! I'll just take my femininity home and hide it under a jar!"

Tina was not the only female participant who encountered problems with a male supervisor. Sandy Bonds says that the third instructor she had in the home repair project gave the two women on his crew a "pretty hard time." She found it difficult to work with him and eventually asked to be transferred to another crew.

> He thought that you gotta be tough and rough in the construction business, so he's gonna give the women a hard time. He said we should learn that we're gonna be hassled on the job. One of those little philosophies... and I don't agree with his approach at all. I think he's just playin' games, myself. A 35 year old man, playin' games on teenage girls--some instructor!

Once they learn the basic skills, how hard is it for young women to function in non-traditional jobs? I asked each of the three participants how she felt about the work itself, what it was like for her on the job, and whether she would continue doing non-traditional work after she left the program.

Genetta Burke was not very enthusiastic about her weatherization tasks or work environment, and she did not plan a career in this line of work:

> If they ain't pushin' me too much, it's okay. Like yesterday, they had me weatherstrippin' a door. And they wanted me to weatherstrip a window and paint the boards on the bottom and the basement windows--all at the same time. Now that made me mad. I just told 'em I wasn't doin' all that. I'd just weatherstrip the door, but forget all this paintin' and stuff!
>
> I wouldn't mind going out and workin' every day, long as the houses we go to are nice and clean, you know. But the people's houses we been workin' on lately ain't clean at all. I don't like workin' in places like that. But just cause I don't like it, seems like they gotta take me to those jobs.
>
> But you know, it's pretty easy cause the guys are all there, you know. And if I don't want to do somethin', then I can get them to do it for me! Even Henry. Some of the guys think that I'm...that I think I'm better than them. Because I don't like to joke around or play a lot. ...I think I'd do better with older people, more mature people. Men are babies until they're 30!
>
> Only way I'd work in weatherizing is if I didn't think of another trade, or if there was nothing else left. I guess I would take it then, you know? But sayin', like, am I gonna jump right into it? No. No, I just wanna learn how to do these things. So, you know, I have a skill aside if some other kind of trainin' don't work out for me.

Tina Middleton quit her fisheries job after four months and requested reassignment to a clerical position. Though she didn't like the job and never really adjusted to the work, Tina doesn't feel that her stint at the fisheries was entirely without value:

> It did teach me a lot about some things. It taught me how to deal with an all-male situation. I'd never done that before. I was the only girl out there, and I felt super out of place. At first I was really ill at ease all the time. It was just like, "Oh, God! They're all looking at me. My hair's out of place!" But I finally got used to that.
>
> But I still felt weird, because I couldn't do the physical work, like the guys were doing. I'm not a feminist, really, or a big liberated woman or anything. But I felt I should be doing as much as they were, because I was being paid the same thing. So I would try to do as much as they would. And I would be sore as sore when I got home. About half the time, I just couldn't do it. It was so embarrassing to have to say, "I can't do this. I just can't move it, I'm sorry."
>
> At first, I was just going to try to keep going. I really needed the credit to graduate. And I thought maybe at first it was just me. I thought, "Maybe you're just being too picky here." So I told myself, "Okay, let's calm down here and try it." And I worked as hard as I could. I tried but it still wasn't working.
>
> Then Ron called me in and said, "You really aren't working out too good here." I said, "I know." Then he proceeded to criticize everything I did. I got really hurt. I mean, he found everything I'd ever done wrong and criticized me for it. I finally decided that's enough! Even if I couldn't get another job, I was still going to quit this--just flat out quit. The hell with graduation. I just couldn't take it. But I was lucky that they gave me another job. I got put back in the courthouse as a clerical aide.

Unlike the other two young women, Sandy Bonds plans to continue doing work that has traditionally been reserved for males. She enjoys carpentry work and would like to find full-time employment in this field after leaving the home repair project. Sandy feels the project has been a good experience for her, and she is philosophical about the problems that she may encounter in her chosen career:

> It's real hard for women. Because all of a sudden, what's called "femininity" is not there anymore when you try to lift up 16 feet of two by fours or something. You've been

taught that if you have any muscles in your arm, you're gonna look like a little boy...that they're gonna call you a butch and all that stuff. I mean, women'll freak out on that. Cuz they know that society doesn't like it. They are taught that, and it's a shame; it really is, I think. But men that are gonna stay macho cuz that's what their dad taught 'em are just as bad off. A man working in a feminine job--like a flower salesman or something--he's gonna be defensive too, you know?

I feel sorry for the kind of guy who thinks, "This is a macho job, and I'm not gonna give no woman no slack on my construction site." That's crazy. You don't have to do what you were taught. You don't have to dress like you were taught to dress. There's a big difference between male and female and how they were taught to grow up.

Women have to wear grubby clothes when they work construction and they have to do heavy work. I think it's hard for most of them. Sometimes it's not just that they get so much shit on the job; it's more like they expect a lot of shit. To some extent, it depends on who you are, how you act, in terms of how much garbage you get from other people on the job. I can see why some women back down, because they weren't taught that they shouldn't back down. I don't know, it's kinda complicated.

Personally, if I can't do somethin', I just speak up and say I haven't done it before, you know. If that's true, then someone'll usually show you how to do it. Um, like, see that door right there? Hollow core door, just a piece of veneer plywood in it. It wouldn't weigh more than about 25 pounds. But it's real big and wide, and you wonder how somebody could carry it, you know, without hurtin' themselves. Well, I've learned how to carry things without killin' myself--how to pick things up. It's simple, really. Most things that are heavy, if you know how to balance them with your weight, then you can pick them up. I stacked four ten foot pressure treated two by four pieces of wood on my shoulder this morning. It was maybe 70 pounds, but if you just stick it up on your shoulder and have the weight towards the back and hold the front end with your arm to balance it, there's just no problem. You know the legs on a person are awful powerful. When you lift you use your legs anyway--not your back. Once you learn how to pick things up, there's no problem. You can learn anything...just depends on what you want.

Fitting YEDPA Workers Into Organizations

Some participants were able to expand their knowledge of the working world and define and develop a number of different skills through YEDPA job placements, but other participants encountered substantial barriers to learning and achieved only limited growth from their work experience. Some of the limitations in work experience were the result of inter-personal problems or communication barriers. Others were more a product of the way in which work assignments were structured.

A number of case study participants experienced, at least, initial difficulty fitting themselves into ongoing work environments. As work experience participants, their roles in organizational structures or informal working networks were not always clearly defined. This proved to be an advantage to participants like Jean Ansel, Lui Hueyen, and Douglas Giscard, who were able to identify needs at the worksite and prepare themselves to assume broader responsibilities than those to which they might otherwise have been assigned. But some participants were confused by an unfamiliar network of professional roles and auxiliary responsibilities and had a hard time figuring out how they, as YEDPA aides, could or should function at the worksite. Peggy Bromfield's description of her experience in a unversity medical center reflects some of this confusion:

> I was in the Medical Careers Exploration Project. Two hours out of each day, we would go and observe different medical fields, like psychiatrist, speech therapist, physical therapist, paramedic instructor, and so on. They would tell about what they do, what they get paid, how much schooling is needed, how they got there, and what they think the benefits are and what the disadvantages are. It was really good for me, because wanting to be a physical therapist, you have to understand what all the other medical fields are, because you're going to be working with them.
>
> The other six hours I would be working--mostly in the hydro room. I learned a lot there. The people I worked with were really impressed with me at first, because I had so much energy. I really wanted to get things done and to learn. After a few months, I was working pretty much as a physical therapist assistant. The girl that was training me went on vacation, and she gave me two weeks to prove myself by working on my own.
>
> But I ran into problems, you know. Cause I *cared* about the patients. The physical therapist was too busy concentrating on the physical abilities to even bother with the mental abilities. I figure if a person is going to help herself, she's going to have to use her mental abilities. So I would talk to the patients a lot. Reassure them while they were getting therapy and try and distract

> them from the pain. But the therapist got pissed off and told my supervisor that I was being too friendly with the patients. My supervisor said, "Why do you think the therapist would tell me these things? Think about it over the weekend and see if you can figure out what to do about it."
>
> I was pretty confused, and I didn't think she was being really straight with me. When I thought about it, I decided that one thing was that they were worried about me being too friendly--especially with the men--worried that the patients might get the wrong impression. I also think they might have been mad, because I was doing half their job and I'm just a CETA trainee. Anyway, I finally figured out that I could be a little more professional, you know, but still be friendly and be myself. And I still tried to help the patients understand what they were going through and explain the things that were happening to them when they're in the hydro room.
>
> Going through that experience helped me realize that I want to work in physical therapy, but I don't want to be a physical therapist in a hospital. I'd like to be a therapy assistant and work with like a clinic or a chiropractor. I learned a lot from the hospital. Some of the staff there really helped me. But they look down on you too. I mean they introduce you to patients and new staff by saying, "This is Peggy Bromfield. She's on CETA. I don't know what CETA means, but she's on it." You know, they treat you like you're just part-time help and don't count for much. I was working there full-time and doing a lot of good, but the regular therapist assistant, Donna, she always took all of the credit.

Besides Peggy Bromfield, several other case study participants complained about experiencing discrimination at the worksite because they were program participants rather than regular employees. Carmeletta DeVries spent six months working as a food service aide in a state operated hospital cafeteria. Though the work was routine, she liked it well enough to nurture hopes for transition into a permanent position. But Carmeletta felt that, in her special status as a program participant, she was not always treated fairly:

> We would hand meals out to the patients. You know, wipe the tables. Sweep the floors. Everybody would get out and help. Then later we would pour the milk for dinner. Serve the dinner. Then go up on the units and put laundry away. I liked it quite a lot...But, you know, sometimes I was treated different because I was a CETA worker. I didn't think that was right. There were signs up that said, "Don't let CETA workers use your keys," or "CETA workers cannot answer or use the phone." God! I felt

> I was treated like a patient or something...you know, "Don't let patients or CETA workers..." I couldn't use anyone's keys. And everywhere you go there's a lock. When I got ready to leave, I might have a minute or two to get across the street to the bus stop. I'd have to run all the way back to the cafeteria to get somebody to unlock the door for me. I didn't think that was right. And they had me wash windows. There were big cafeteria windows that they don't wash but every year or so, you know. They said, "You're a CETA worker, and all the CETA workers have to wash the windows." And I said, "If I wasn't here, who would wash these windows?" You know, I was really mad. People was sitting around on their coffee breaks, and I'm sitting up there washing windows, you know. Everybody else was sitting around and talking. I didn't think that was fair.

While several case study participants felt they were singled out or overburdened at the worksite in comparison with regular employees, there were other cases where participants had so little responsibility that their presence or absence at the worksite was scarcely noticed by other employees.

Bobby Jones was employed part-time at the community center where he attended YIEPP remedial education classes. Because of his interest in sports, Bobby was assigned to be a sports reporter for the center's monthly newsletter. He was supposed to attend all recreational activities and write descriptive reports. But the work didn't keep him busy for the four hours a day for which he was being paid. During his working hours, Bobby came and went pretty much as he pleased. He attended some events but only wrote three or four short items each month. He spent a lot of his time hanging around the center watching regular employees do their jobs. And while he didn't develop any marketable skills of his own, he does believe that he learned a lot about how people function in a community organization:

> I been up here a lot. Watchin' these people. It's all different kinds of work in this building. I know. I ask people how they do it...watch what they do. I know how to work the switchboard upstairs and things like that. You know, bein' up here and knowin' all the executive dudes of the building real good, I see a lot. Mostly, a lot of jobs they do have paper work. I see a lot of people get real mean from that kind of work. You know, you can see it...you can just see it. They come to work, and they all tight...tense, you know...mean. It shows. It shows. Eight hours a day really get to them people.

Supervision

During the case study research, most of the problems that were observed in work experience components were related in some way to the supervision of participants at the worksite. There is no single formula for effective worksite supervision. Different participants need different things from a supervisor. And different work assignments and learning objectives imply different levels of supervisory control. Sometimes close supervision, maximum direction, and considerable support are necessary. Other times, less intensive supervisory approaches seem to work better. But for work experience to yield effective results, participants need to feel that there is someone at the worksite to whom they are responsible, and that this person is both willing and able to provide direction, advice and assistance. Participants need feedback from their supervisors, both positive and negative, in order to determine how well they are performing on the job and what kind of improvement is possible. To facilitate maximum growth and learning, participants should know whether they are meeting employer expectations and they should have the opportunity to articulate their own needs and establish individual learning objectives.

The establishment of clear communication channels between supervisor and worker seemed to be a key factor in determining the value of work experience for case study participants. Several participants had especially close relationships with their supervisors. Mark Gurney feels that he learned a lot from his supervisor at the daycare center:

> I liked my work best on that job, because I got along real good with my supervisor. He's taught me about a lot of things--not just for that job, but for the future. He's been real straight in telling me about the way things are.

Heidi Clark feels that her supervisor made it easy for her to learn and progress in her job at the Forest Service. Heidi says:

> Certain people have a way of making you understand what is really going on. You know, some people can just teach you easier and better--maybe they just have a gift for it or something.

While many of the participants were able to make an adequate adjustment to whatever kind of supervisory arrangement prevailed at the worksite, the case study material suggests that some participants could have learned more from work experience and had far fewer problems if supervisory roles had been more clearly defined and more conscientiously and consistently exercised. Less than half of the case study participants felt they received enough feedback from their supervisors about their performance on the job. After a formal introduction to their supervisor and a brief discussion of job functions, some of the participants were left to work pretty much on their own. In this situation, a number of participants were able to define their roles and learn new skills by establishing more informal working relationships with others at the worksite. But some participants had difficulty communicating effectively with their co-workers and remained isolated and without any clear sense of direction through most of their period of work experience. Several participants who had communication problems and little feedback from their supervisors eventually dropped out of YEDPA programs.

Jack Thrush was placed in a work experience position as a janitorial aide for a non-profit agency. At first he liked his job, which included painting, repair, and maintenance tasks. But Jack says that he never really knew whether the people at the agency thought he was doing a good job. When he started having problems with the work, there was nobody with whom he felt he could discuss them. As he had done earlier when he had problems in high school, Jack started skipping days and finally stopped showing up altogether. This is what Jack says about his experience:

> I thought the job at Neighborhood Center was pretty good. It was the most I'd ever been paid, and I was working nearly full-time. But I had, uh, a communication problem with the boss. She seemed like a really nice person... really smart and thoughtful toward others. But I think she had a lot to handle or something. I don't know, to me it seemed she didn't quite know where I was at at all, and I didn't know where she was at...The work that I was doing right before I left was sanding. And I, uh, well, I started feeling it was hazardous to my health. I don't know, I just started getting a real negative attitude about the job. I didn't want to bother anybody. But I stopped coming in on time, or coming in at all, and stuff like that. They didn't say anything to me. But I felt I was in a spot. My counselor started calling me up... asking me would I like a different job. I guess I wanted a different job, but I felt that I'd be lettin' a whole lot of people down at Neighborhood Center. The pressure got to me, but I couldn't seem to do anything about it. I wish now that before I quit I'd have talked to someone or done something instead of just screwing up there.

As a 17 year old single mother, Carmeletta DeVries had a hard time juggling new job responsibilities with the demands of the welfare office and her infant son. Carmeletta never got a clear picture of her supervisor's expectations, and she decided to quit her job when she had a conflict that she couldn't resolve on her own:

> I never talked too much to my supervisor, but a couple times she said that I did good work. On my time card, there was a place for remarks, but she never evaluated me. So I didn't know what she thought, but I thought I was doing pretty good there. Then after my baby had been sick and I had to miss work a couple times, she got mad at me for not callin' in. I did call up once, but nobody really told me that you were supposed to call before 9:00 every day you weren't comin'. She said if I missed

> again I would have to be dismissed. A while after that, I got this card that I had to be at the welfare office Monday morning. I tried to call them up and change it to another time. But they said it was about medicaide or something and I had to come in or I might be cut off it. I knew it meant I was going to lose my job. And I was thinking I would try to get hired on there, cuz the pay is good, workin' for the state. But I couldn't afford to lose the medicaide, so I quit my job.

Mark Westgate's first YETP assignment was on a maintenance work crew at his high school. Mark says all he wanted from his part-time job was the chance to earn a little money. He expected hard work, but he grew disgusted with the lack of supervision and discipline on the maintenance crew. Instead of quitting, Mark requested a change of assignment:

> A lot of times we weren't really sure what they wanted us to do. Some days there'd be a lot of work, and other days--zilch. There were six to eight of us on the crew, but only myself and two or three others really did any work. The rest of the kids--we called them the "Critters" --they'd be out behind the gym, smoking and pitching pennies...or doing whatever it is they like to do. You know the type? They didn't do any work in class, and they weren't going to do any work on their job after school if they could help it--even though they *were* getting paid. I got tired of it pretty quick, and I worked out a deal with the Band Director, where I could be assigned as an aide in the Music Room.

Poor supervision in an individual placement situation can negatively affect the progress and outcome of work experience for a single participant. But inadequate or insensitive supervision in a project situation affects an entire group of participants and may result in general demoralization and chaos at the worksite. Carrie Green was assigned to a university based YCCIP project to receive work experience and training as a clerical aide. From the beginning, Carrie experienced difficulties in her work assignment. And she was not alone; six of her co-workers, who were interviewed during the initial screening for the case study research, were also having problems handling their project jobs at the university.

Dr. White, who wrote the initial proposal for the university and later became project director, had little contact with participants once they were installed in project jobs. Though Dr. White was the only person with authority to provide direction, settle disputes, or make final decisions about project functions, he delegated responsibility for the daily supervision of 12 full-time project participants to his 19 year old secretary, who, herself, was a CETA public service employment participant. This young PSE worker lacked the experience, preparation, and personal skills to provide effective supervision to a crew of inexperienced workers in addition to handling her regular job tasks.

Inadequate supervision was not the only problem with this project. Participant job functions and learning objectives were never clearly defined. Training was administered only on a haphazard, task-oriented basis. There were no formal policies governing the assignment or rotation of tasks. These kinds of decisions were left to the secretary, who--no doubt through confusion and frustration--often acted arbitrarily and sometimes reversed assignments at the last minute. The participants had little respect for their young acting supervisor, and they frequently challenged her authority and questioned her judgment. When things got out of hand, Dr. White's response was usually to support his assistant and penalize "disruptive" participants. Carrie was more outspoken than most of her co-workers. By the time she terminated from the project, Carrie felt she had been labeled a troublemaker:

> When I first came on, you know, there was a pile of work just backed up in the office I had to say, "Hey, I can't do all this. This is too much for me." So they tried to divide it up better, but Susan, she would get so hassled...you never knew exactly what you were supposed to do. Dr. White would say one thing, but Susan would change it. She's his secretary. She'd come around and check on you, you know. Her attitude was really bad... like, "I'm the boss here. So do as I say or you'll lose your job." It was like you were a little kid. It was, I don't know...degrading. It was. She didn't really care about us. This one girl was pregnant, mind you, and she told her to get up on a table and put something away on this shelf up by the ceiling.
>
> Shd didn't act like a boss, cuz she'd go running to Dr. White and tell him everything we did. Even if we went to the bathroom, she thought we were running around or something. Dr. White knew she had this cocky attitude, but he'd back her up. He didn't like me, cuz at this one meeting--we had a meeting with all of us about our attitudes and stuff--and I just told him how it was there. He got upset that I spoke up. He got real offended, cuz I told him how the attitude was, and how I think it should change. He looked at me, and his face got red. And he said, "Well, if you don't like your job, you know what you can do." And I said, "You're asking us what's wrong, and we're supposed to be telling you. But when you hear it, you can't handle it."
>
> After that, it was like they were just looking for me to make trouble. If I was one minute late, they would deduct it from my pay. But everyone had a hard time. Terry and Anita quit. Sheryl got in a fight with Susan, and she got fired over it. Betty was suspended for five days, cuz she had watched the fight and didn't do nothing about it. Finally I just had to quit. Practically the only people that stayed there were the ones that had kids or something and couldn't afford to lose the job.

Project Problems and Limitations

I've encountered relatively few projects that were as mismanaged and poorly supervised as the university based YCCIP project to which Carrie Green was assigned. But the case study material suggests that project jobs are more prone to problems and limitations than individual work experience assignments. Keeping participants productively occupied seemed to be a particular problem on school based work crews, like the one on which Mark Westgate worked. It was also a problem on projects involving weatherization and construction activities. Participants in these kinds of projects were generally assigned to crews that work on low-income homes or public facilities. Several project operators seemed to have chronic difficulty lining up enough work, scheduling it, and coordinating crew assignments so that everybody was working. Participants like Genetta Burke, Harold Thomas, and Adam Sledge complained that they spent too much time "just sitting around, waiting to go out on the job."

Sven Latoka reported that work in his YCCIP renovation project was sometimes held up when they ran out of materials or had to wait for another crew to finish their part of a job. But he said that he didn't spend much time sitting around:

> I've been busy. You know, it's up to the individual. If you want to keep yourself busy. Some people are just lazy. If there's nothing else to do, you can always pick up a broom, clear away the trash...stuff like that. Sometimes there's just certain things that come up, not everybody can work all the time. That's just the way this business is.

Both Genetta Burke and Harold Thomas said that "waiting around" was the thing they liked least about the YCCIP weatherization project in which they were enrolled. They felt that their supervisors did not always plan activities well or provide enough direction. Both also reported that the participants in the project "fooled" around a lot and sometimes acted like children. And, though Genetta at least felt she had learned some new skills, neither thought their project activities constituted a "real" job. Genetta says:

> The guys in this project are just too young. And they play too much. They gang around, and they tell too many jokes and stuff like that. Some days they fool around all day. Sometimes I think this job is a joke. I come here if I wanna laugh. They really like to kid around.
>
> Sometimes the staff treat us like babies. A while back, I was thinkin' about quittin'. I was gonna go, because they was makin' up some stupid rules. They come off sometimes, and they have us doin' this and doin' that. But we never know about it until it happens. I figure when you work, they should let you know before. But they always tell you, you have to wait. One day they

> just left us on a job. It was at the end of the day. They needed the van for something, and we just got stuck. And nobody hardly had any money to get home. Everybody's trying to bum money from each other, cuz they just left us. I didn't like that. But they haven't done it again since everybody, you know, got together and talked about it.

Project work crews can be supportive environments for participants with little previous work experience, but some feel that they are held back by the limitations of others on the crew. Sven Latoka said that he didn't mind helping and instructing co-workers who were slower or less skilled than he, but he resented those who "held things up for everyone, cuz they don't really want to work." Harold Thomas grew exasperated with participants who "couldn't seem to get the hang of it" after several months on the job, and he felt working with them slowed him down on the job.

The project approach seems to work well in providing initial orientation to a vocational area and teaching basic skills. But participants who want to refine their skills and develop more sophisticated vocational competencies are sometimes disappointed with what the project experience can offer. Project formats may limit individual participants' abilities to move at their own pace, and supervisors or crew leaders may be too involved in group dynamics to perceive individual needs or structure special learning experiences.

After eight months on the Emergency Home Repair Project, Sandy Bonds wanted to improve her carpentry skills for finish work, which she didn't get much chance to develop on crew assignments. She talked to her crew leader about a special assignment. But Sandy was disappointed with the way her crew leader responded to her request:

> That whole deal about finish work just really blew up today. Let's see...about two months ago, I asked my crew leader if we could do some more in-depth work, making patterns. And he said sure, fine. They set it up for our crew to get the next cabinet job, and I could do it like a special project. Well, the cabinet job has been going on for about two weeks now. I've been in there to work on them. But as far as physical labor, all I've gotten to do on 'em was put a couple staple guns to 'em and put a little glue on. I didn't get a chance to do any, you know, cutting out and putting together, or any figuring for it. I was really unhappy about that.
>
> As far as I can understand, it's because my crew leader decided that he wanted to cut it out and put it together himself. That really screwed me around, cuz I thought that he was gonna teach me how to do it, and he ended up doing the whole thing. Well, we had a little argument about that. He contradicts himself. And it's confusing

> cuz ya can't understand what he's tryin' to convey to you. I heard him say this morning that he didn't think we were capable to do that kind of work, and that's why he did it. And I thought, here's a public school teacher tellin' me that I'm incapable to do this work, and that's what I'm here to learn. It kinda pissed me off, you know. I've been there over eight months, and there's nothing that he did to those cabinets that I couldn't have done.
>
> It really upset me a lot. So I brought this up to the supervisor, and they just decided to take me off his crew. I thought maybe I should try to stick it out, you know. But I've been doin' this crew three months, and I'm tired of doin' so much screwin' around with him. It pisses me off though, cuz I feel that he's held me back.

Learning on YEDPA Jobs

How well did YEDPA work experience meet different participant needs? What do participants think about their temporary program jobs? The predominant response of the case study participants to YEDPA work experience was positive and enthusiastic. Though it is clear from interview material that work experience was not of equal quality or benefit for all the participants, the large majority of case study participants believe that, apart from the income it provided, their YEDPA job was a worthwhile experience that enhanced their ability to secure better employment in the future.

Within the case study group, the major benefit reported to be derived from work experience was the opportunity to observe and work with others. About two-thirds of the participants felt that they were able to learn a lot from other workers, both in relationship to specific job skills and to more general perspectives on adult work life. Only three participants believe that they learned little or nothing of value from those with whom they worked.

The variation in training focus and skill development potential of YEDPA jobs seemed to be as great as the range of differences in pre-program skill levels and work readiness among the case study participants. Interview material indicates that while the match between participant needs and type of work experience placement was not often perfect, most case study participants learned some skills and developed capabilities that should enhance their future employability. Over half the youth perspectives participants believe that their YEDPA jobs were very effective in teaching them new skills and information that could be applied in non-subsidized work environments. Nine of the 29 case study participants involved in work experience felt their jobs were only moderately effective in this regard. Only three participants felt their work experience in YEDPA programs did not teach them any new skills or give them any new information that could be effectively applied in their future work lives.

Do YEDPA work tasks engage the interests of participants and challenge them to expand and diversify capabilities? Or does job structure merely encourage the development of a disciplined but restrictive approach to a narrow range of functions? Participant work experience positions, like "real" jobs, ranged from one end of this spectrum to the other. But in comparison with most jobs available to teenagers in the regular labor market, YEDPA work experience seemed to offer more opportunity to engage in diversified and expanding job tasks. While most of their pre-YEDPA jobs were characterized by participants as tedious and boring, nearly two-thirds of the case study participants said they found their YEDPA work to be very interesting. Nearly a third of the participants felt that the work they were assigned in conjunction with YEDPA jobs was at least moderately interesting. Only two participants said that the work in which they had been engaged held little or no interest for them. But while almost half of the case study participants said that their jobs included a variety of different functions and learning opportunities that encouraged them to grow, the slight majority of participants felt that their jobs could have provided more variety and autonomy and more opportunity to develop individual skills.

Motivation and Adjustment Problems

Nearly all of the case study participants reported that the first few weeks on YEDPA jobs or in training classes were the most difficult period in their program participation cycles. Getting used to new situations and unfamiliar roles and expectations was not easy, but most participants were able to make the adjustment without serious problems. Students who worked only 10 to 20 hours a week and participants who were enrolled in vocational training components typically adjusted quickly and successfully to program schedules and responsibilities. But high school dropouts in the case study group, particularly those with limited previous work experience or conflicting family responsibilities, were more apt to experience motivation or adjustment problems.

Dropouts, like Sven Latoka, who had already developed a strong work orientation generally had little difficulty making the transition to YEDPA employment. But young people who had been both out of school and out of work for some time usually had life styles that did not accommodate easily to work schedules and regimens. Jack Thrush found that working seven hours a day left him with "no time to socialize at all." He got in the habit of "taking a day off, without calling in, to go see friends and stuff like that." During the early period of her participation on the home repair project, Sandy Bonds also often failed to show up for work. The motivation and performance problems she experienced were not unusual:

> I had problems just getting there at first. I wasn't used to it at all, and I was absent a lot. It kind of reminded me of school--where you had to get up. And that made me not want to go. Also I was a little screwed up physically. I'm somewhat of a diabetic, and I hadn't been eating right. I'd been eating mostly popcorn and

> potato chips, and I was feelin' tired all the time. So I'd be late a lot...or when I stayed home, I wouldn't call in.
>
> I got in trouble about that. They put me on probation for a month. And they said, "If you come in late or don't show up, you're fired." And then I realized, "If you don't go, dummy, you're not gonna have a paycheck or a place to live." Since that time I've had an almost perfect record. I've worked more hours than anybody there. And the more I worked, the more I liked it.

If the work held enough interest and challenge, case study participants were usually able to overcome initial problems and make a successful adjustment. Jean Ansel said:

> It was really hard at first to get myself up and get going each day. I'd never thought of having a job like that. I didn't have too much clothes, and I felt I couldn't wear levis there. But the work was just so exciting for me. That's what really kept me coming. And when I got some money finally, I was able to go out and buy a few clothes, and my appearance improved. I got so I didn't want to ever quit. After awhile, I wouldn't miss work for anything!

Young mothers in the case study group had a particularly hard time coordinating household responsibilities with their new work schedules. Carmeletta DeVries had only been a mother for eight months when she started her YEDPA job, and she had never worked full-time before. She couldn't figure out how she was "supposed to get everything done." She frequently missed time from work:

> Well, I wouldn't go when I had to take my baby to the doctor. You know, they only have certain appointment times at the clinic and you can't get right in. Then a couple times, I had to go and get my food stamps. There was always somethin'! Like I would need to go to the store. I wouldn't have no money. And I wouldn't get out of work till five and the bank closes at five, so I'd have to leave early.

The responsiveness of supervisors in understanding the circumstances and difficulties of individual participants and in setting guidelines to help them make an adjustment was an important factor in program success or failure. Carmeletta received little feedback from her supervisor. She continued to miss work, without ever discussing her problems, and she eventually lost her job. Jack Thrush also left his job--with his problems undiscussed and unresolved.

Peggy Bromfield's difficulties as a single parent were compounded by a drinking problem. But with the understanding of her supervisor, Peggy was able to work out her problems and still remain on the project:

> I was still drinking heavy when I first started there. I'd turn off that alarm automatically in the morning, and then I wouldn't go in. I wouldn't even call up. I felt bad, but I was ashamed to tell my supervisor, Lila. I thought, if you got bad personal problems, you shouldn't be working at a hospital. But finally, I had to tell her, and she was pretty understanding. I took off work a week and quit drinking.
>
> Then right after that, the kids got the measles and I couldn't get anyone to watch them. I started crying at work cuz I knew I'd have to stay home. Lila said, "Don't worry, we'll let you make up the time, and you won't lose any pay." I said, "I'm more worried about losing the experience than the pay." But she said, "You'll get through it okay." And I did. After that, things started to work out better.

Earning While Learning

Paying participants wages, rather than training stipends, is one of the ways that YEDPA work experience helps to prepare young people for regular labor market participation. Most of the case study participants were enthusiastic about the fact that they were earning money in their YEDPA jobs. While some participants applied for YEDPA positions primarily, or only, because they would receive a steady, if temporary, income; others valued the opportunity to gain experience and develop new skills that would improve their future employment prospects. These participants thought that getting paid for learning was a "pretty good deal."

YEDPA jobs typically paid only minimum wage, at least during the initial period of work experience. The majority of participants in the Youth Perspectives case study group felt that the rate of pay for YEDPA work experience was fair. As Sven Latoka said, "If you were doing more skilled work, then maybe you should earn more money. But you're getting trained there so you should be willing to accept minimum wage." Some participants were more than just "willing to accept" minimum wage; they were excited about the opportunity to earn that much. Many participants had previously worked in jobs that paid considerably less than minimum wage. Joy Tippets said, "Compared to my job at the dime store, I'm working more and making more money. Going up from $1.50 to minimum wage was quite a nice difference!"

This research suggests that as participants spent more time in work experience positions, and as their skills improved and responsibilities increased, they were more apt to become dissatisfied with the rate of pay for YEDPA work.

Some work experience components were structured so that those who did well and took on new functions would receive "merit raises". And while such pay increases were typically small (10 to 25 cent per hour), they seemed to have a highly positive effect on reinforcing a participant's sense of progress and accomplishment. But participants who were able to fulfill the same job functions as regular workers in employing agencies were apt to question the fairness of the difference between their CETA wages and the pay their co-workers received.

Carmeletta DeVries says that she couldn't help comparing her paycheck with those of the other workers in the hospital cafeteria: "They was getting four or five dollars an hour, doing the same thing I was doing. And I had to wash those windows, you know!" Tina Middleton felt the same way in regard to her secretarial work at the county courthouse:

> Last summer, I was doing the exact same work they were doing in the office there. And they were getting paid four or five dollars an hour, and I was only making $2.65. That seemed a little strange, you know.

Lui Hueyen also compared her own job performance with that of a co-worker, but she wasn't so sure that she had a basis for complaint:

> There's a lady who works in there with me. I have the ability to do more than her--learn quicker and understand faster. But she only works part of the time with me. Maybe she's better at other things and is worth more money to the employer. I don't really know.

Though they would like to have earned higher wages, some participants were bothered more by the fact that their CETA paychecks were often late. One participant said, "You never know exactly when they will actually show up, so you can't really count on it." Heidi Clark jokes that the best thing about becoming a regular employee at the Forest Service was not the $1.25 pay increase she received but the knowledge that, when everyone else in the office was paid, she too could be sure of receiving a check.

Participants who worked full-time, particularly those who were engaged in strenuous physical labor, were more likely to feel they were underpaid than were students, who worked only part-time. Genetta Burke thought that she should earn more for her work on the weatherization project: "For all the work we put in, we don't get enough. Cuz we don't even make but about $75 a week, and I don't think that's good enough for all that we been doin'." All the participants who worked full-time, or close to full-time, were high school dropouts. Most needed more money than high school students did, because they were living away from their parents and had to support themselves. Participants who viewed work experience participation primarily as a job, rather than as a developmental program, were more apt to complain about "low wages". But Sven Latoka said, "I'm willing to do a job at low minimum wage as long as I'm getting something out of it, and I enjoy doing it."

Although students were generally very satisfied with the prevailing rates of pay for part-time YEDPA work, most said they would like to be putting in more hours at the worksite. High school participants are often restricted to 10 or 15 hours of work experience per week. The majority of the high school participants in the youth perspective case group said that they would like to work at least 20 hours a week. Most claimed they would have no trouble balancing more hours of work with their current high school schedules. A number of the high school seniors said that they had already completed most of their graduation requirements and were only taking two or three classes by the time they reached their final semester. Lynn Hazelton said, "I could work easily from 11:00 to 4:00 every day, and I'd still have all night to get my homework done."

Though most students said that they didn't find it hard to manage both work and school, others acknowledged that they found it more difficult to study when they were working, particularly during the early adjustment period. Patty Monson said, "At first it held me back from getting much school work done at all. But now I think I've got it down. I'm doing well, now." Felisa Santana found it hard to work and study at first, but says that she got used to it quickly. "I still want to go to college, and I'm going to have to be working all my life." Lui Hueyen felt that her job at the computer center "distracted" her for a while and made it harder to study. But she says that her grades didn't suffer.

Participants who worked more hours and those who worked in strenuous jobs seemed to have a harder time studying. Some of them said that they were tired all the time. Lori Wozisky left her 15 hour a week work experience position for a 35 to 40 hour a week non-subsidized job as a cashier. To manage her work schedule and complete her studies, Lori says she had to stay up until about 2:00 a.m. each night and get up at 6:00 each morning. Tina Middleton said her job at the fisheries tired her out so much that she would sometimes fall asleep while doing her homework.

The two participants who were enrolled in Boston's YIEPP program worked a 20 hour a week schedule in addition to attending special education classes for five hours each morning. They reported having little difficulty managing dual roles as students and workers. Bobby Jones, who entered the YIEPP project after spending nearly two years out of school and unemployed, said: "It feels good to be workin' at something and learning. I like knowin' what has to be done." Although remedial education can be an intensive experience for participants like Bobby, with serious academic skill deficiencies, the pressures did not seem too great since most studying is done in the classroom, rather than at home, and the classroom and worksite are often in the same facility.

Most of the high school dropouts, who were working 30-40 hours per week in YEDPA jobs, were also enrolled in GED preparation programs. Participants who worked all day and attended GED classes at night seemed to have a more difficult time than those who were given released time from their project or work experience jobs to attend classes in the afternoons. Those for whom

GED completion was a personal goal had more positive perspectives on the management of work and school responsibilities than did those who were required or persuaded to attend GED instruction. As one participant said, "You can make the time and energy for anything that you really want."

Some participants were enthusiastic about working in YEDPA jobs even though they received no income advantages from program participation. Peggy Bromfield received $30 per week while enrolled in the Medical Careers Exploration Project, but the welfare office subtracted $30 a week from her AFDC grant. Patty Monson was allowed to keep $100 a month from her YETP job, with no cut in her AFDC check, but she used all of the extra money to pay her mother for child care. Jean Ansel was on the Independent Living Subsidy Program when she first got her YETP job, so she experienced no immediate improvement in her financial situation by virtue of program participation. But Jean says:

> I didn't even think of it like that. I never thought of the money situation in terms of how much I should get from CETA. I knew it was a good break for me to get that kind of job, and I was just thankful to be in the situation where I was.

VII. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

> I'm feeling good. I got a job I really like. It doesn't pay much yet, but I know there's a future in it for me. I've worked hard for this, and the program is what made it possible. Maybe I could've gotten here on my own--I really don't know. One thing's for sure, without CETA it would've been tougher--a whole lot tougher!
>
> Todd Clinton

> I think about the future all the time. There's so much I want to do! But I'm worried, because I don't know yet what I'll be. I'm not content with what I'm doing now. Really, I'm scared to death! Cuz I'm alone now--on my own. There's no going back to high school. I can only go forward. Oh, god, I feel...the world...it's out to get me! And I'm out to get it!
>
> Linda Larsen

Youth employment and training programs have two major purposes: (1) to provide income and work for young people who would otherwise be unemployed, underemployed, or idle, and (2) to improve the labor force transition and long term employment prospects of participants from disadvantaged target groups. The Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) allocated new funds, mandated cooperative arrangements between employment and training agencies and schools, and authorized a variety of services that could be applied toward these ends. How effective were YEDPA programs in meeting their objectives?

Although a considerable body of research and assessment findings is being amassed on YEDPA outcomes and performance, it is still too early for any final verdicts on program effectiveness. The majority of YEDPA participants, like Todd Clinton and Linda Larsen, are just beginning their work lives. For many, it will be years before relative employment success or failure becomes apparent. The full impact of YEDPA programs on the lives and career outcomes of the young people who participated will never be formally assessed. The documentation of long term career outcomes and the isolation and tracking of program effects present staggering technical problems. Though the labor market experiences of some participants will be followed and recorded over time, theoretical and practical constraints will limit our ability to assemble conclusive evidence on the relative effectiveness of different program services in improving long range employment and earning outcomes.

The immediate employment impact of YEDPA is much easier to gauge. Of the four new programs authorized by YEDPA, all but YETP emphasized immediate job creation and income provision over a more diversified range of employability development services. Even under YETP, which focused more heavily on training and developmental objectives, subsidized employment, in the form of full or part-time work experience, accounted for the major portion of program activities. The benefits of YEDPA job creation were enormous. The total number of employment opportunities accessible to the nation's young was boosted substantially during a period in which millions of youth were jobless. During its first two years, YEDPA served nearly 750,000 young people. The large majority of these participants were economically and otherwise disadvantaged. If YEDPA jobs had not been available, many of these young people would, undoubtedly, have been without work and income.

While few would contend that participants were not better off for the work and income provided by YEDPA programs, it is clear that job creation offers only a temporary respite and not a permanent solution to youth employment problems. Even if youth job programs are continued on a massive scale, subsidized employment, alone, cannot meet the longer term needs of young people from disadvantaged target populations. For the participants in the case study group, YEDPA enrollment was an only temporary alternative to regular labor force participation. Most program completors reentered competitive job markets that had changed little during the four to eighteen months in which they were enrolled in YEDPA programs. For the individual leaving YEDPA programs, the critical issue was whether she or he was better prepared, by virtue of program participation, to face the realities of the working world.

Beyond temporary work and financial support, what did the case study participants gain from their involvement in YEDPA programs? Did participation offer them only short term advantages or did it help them to prepare effectively for a life time of labor force competition and independent career management? In this final chapter, we will look at program outcomes and effects from a participant perspective, and we'll consider what the future might hold in store for the 32 case study participants.

Employment Outcomes and Job Readiness

Promoting participant job readiness and economic self-sufficiency is a key focus of all employment and training activities. For decades manpower programs have been evaluated on the basis of their performance in placing enrollees in unsubsidized jobs and improving the earnings of those they serve. Youth targeted programs, like YEDPA, are also concerned with employment and earning outcomes, but their focus is typically broader.

The young people in the case study group entered YEDPA programs at varying stages of job readiness. Some were already full-time labor force participants; others were seeking an initial introduction to the world of work. All faced employment and earning barriers, but differences in the severity of these barriers were great. Some participants entered programs with high motivation, good academic, communication, and work skills. Others had severe handicaps in all these areas and were, by all indications, years away from employability. The employment related objectives of individual participants also varied widely. While some participants were seeking an immediate transition to career employment, others planned to remain in school for two to five more years.

Given the differences within the case study group, in terms of starting places, YEDPA program assignments, length of enrollment, and personal objectives, one could hardly expect program participants to result in homogeneous outcomes. When the youth perspectives research ended in June 1979, three-fourths (24) of the case study participants had completed, or otherwise terminated, YEDPA participation. One-fourth (8) of the participants were still enrolled, and all but one of these participants were within three months of completion. Of those who were no longer participants, one-third were employed in unsubsidized jobs, and one-third were actively seeking work. Eight case study participants were not in the labor force when the research ended: two were enrolled in college on a full-time basis, two had re-enrolled in high school, two had enlisted in the Army, and two were at home, tending children and receiving AFDC support. Though this tally of outcomes shows an increase in employment and labor force participation within the case study group, in comparison with pre-program levels, it tells us relatively little about the ways in which program participation influenced job readiness.

Some participants made dramatic strides in employability through YEDPA work experience. For four of the case study participants, work experience provided the vocational skills and organizational connections for direct transition to unsubsidized employment. Heidi Palmer, Felisa Santana, Jean Ansel, and Douglas Giscard were all hired as regular workers by the federal, local government, or private non-profit agencies that had supervised their YEDPA work experience assignments. Two of these participants were high school students, who made the transition to full-time jobs after graduation or GED completion. Two were dropouts, with a history of drug problems or juvenile offenses. None had previous experience in the type of work for which she or he was hired, but each of these participants came into the YEDPA job assignment with a determination to succeed; and each received a good deal of training and supervisory support while on the job. None of the hiring agencies made advance commitments to absorb the participant. The young people worked from 12 to 18 months as YEDPA participants before making the transition to regular employment. During this period, each of the participants was able to master a number of job functions and take on new tasks. The transition to regular employment was typically accompanied by an increase in pay and an expansion of responsibilities.

A number of other participants in the case study group were able to develop vocational skills that were marketable in the private sector. Three Portland participants gained occupational skills in classroom training components. Todd Clinton completed a 14 month cosmetology program, secured state licenses in hair design and cosmetology, and found work as a hair stylist with a new, but well-respected salon in Portland. Yvette McDermott spent only 16 weeks in the YETP program, but she was able to complete key punch training at a local community based training facility and secure a full-time job as a key punch operator. Tien Van Chin felt confident of finding full-time work as a computer programmer after his graduation from a private business school.

Some participants felt that their work experience positions had provided sufficient vocational training and experience to allow them access to regular employment in similar occupational areas. Lui Heuyen learned to perform the same job functions as other computer programming assistants at the U.S. Forest Service, and she hoped to find a part-time job in this field while attending college. A number of the clerical trainees thought they had gained enough experience and knowledge of basic office procedures from YEDPA assignments to qualify for entry level positions after program completion. Lynn Hazelton worked as a medical aide for six months, and she planned to apply for a full-time job as a nurse's assistant at a larger hospital in Seattle, that was accepting applicants with 6 to 12 months of experience. Sven Latoka refined his carpentry and construction skills, as a crew leader on a YCCIP project, and he was confident that he could find a job in construction when he completed the program.

Among the other participants who had received work experience on weatherization and construction crews, opinions were divided about whether or not the skills and experience they gained would enable them to function in the private sector. Adam Sledge said he expected to get a "weatherization certificate", which he felt would enable him to get a job as a professional insulator. But Harold Thomas, who worked on the same project, said, "This project was okay for someone who doesn't have a job or a high school diploma, but it's not gonna get you into a real career." Sandy Bonds hoped to find work as a finish carpenter, after leaving the home repair project, but she felt that she really needed more training:

> This has given me a lot of knowledge about craftsmanship and all, but I feel that the average person leaving the program would be lacking the skills to really do it. I mean the skills that come from doing each thing over and over to where you can do it without bending nails or breaking boards or anything. You can't come up to some contractor and say, "Hey, gimmee a job. I know how to do all this stuff, but it takes me a real long time. And every once in a while I have to pull out half the nails I put in."

The majority of the case study participants didn't develop sophisticated vocational skills while involved in work experience assignments. But they believed that simply gaining experience, learning how to get along on the job, and building a work record would help them to get a job when they left the program. Richard Nielsen had not worked before he enrolled in the YETP program. But after six months as janitorial aide, he was able to find a maintenance job on his own with a private employer. Jessica Jackson, who worked as a medical aide said:

> I think me working here will be a big help in the future. It gave me experience in a real job and some good references and something to put down on a resume. I can show that to my next employer, and it will make a good impression. Usually I think, if you've had any kind of real

> job experience, an employer will be more willing to train you. Since I've had some good experience, I think that I'll be more apt to get a job than someone without any.

Most of the case study participants who were looking for work or who were still enrolled in YEDPA programs when the research ended believed that they would have no difficulty getting some kind of job. Most thought they would have to do it on their own; they didn't expect their YEDPA counselors or supervisors to more than provide suggestions. The majority received some instruction in job search techniques while enrolled in YEDPA programs, and they felt confident about handling the mechanics of job inquiry, applications, and interviews. However, by the end of the research period, several participants, like Mark Gurney, Carrie Green, and Linda Larsen, had been actively seeking work for a number of weeks, without success; and they were getting very discouraged. Both Carrie and Mark said they planned to keep looking for jobs, but Mark was also thinking about getting in touch with his YETP counselor to see if he could qualify for an adult CETA training program. Linda Larsen, who felt she had "no chance of getting a good job" in the small town of Hillcrest and had no car or driver's license, wondered whether "CETA could give you the money for college."

Finally, there were a handful of case study participants who said they wanted to work but did little active job seeking after leaving YEDPA programs. Single parents, like Peggy Bromfield and Genetta Burke, enjoyed their YEDPA jobs and were stimulated by their exposure to new employment roles, but program participation did not necessarily prepare or equip them to enter the labor force. Peggy Bromfield got discouraged after discovering that she would need an associate degree and state license to get a job as a physical therapy assistant. Genetta didn't view weatherization work as a serious career possibility. In terms of inter-personal skills, communication abilities, and work experience, these young women were equipped for entry level employment. Both had worked before. But each had two children to support, and neither had the skills or credentials for the kind of job that would allow her to transcend welfare dependency.

Education and School Completion

High school completion has long been a primary objective of youth employment and training programs. YEDPA programs used jobs and income incentives to encourage school enrollment and completion. The YETP program provided students with part-time jobs, that could be fitted to school schedules and would allow the students to earn credit toward high school graduation while meeting income needs. YIEPP "guaranteed" economically disadvantaged students part-time work at minimum wage or above as long as they remained in high school. YIEPP also offered dropouts similar employment if they agreed to return to school. Both YETP and YIEPP programs provided remedial education and academic instruction for dropouts who wanted to earn GED certificates. Even YCCIP projects, which were focused on full-time work for out-of-school youth, typically offered some kind of link to GED instruction.

What impact did YEDPA participation have on high school completion within the case study group? The changes in educational status experienced by the case study participants are impressive. When the Youth Perspectives Project began, none of the participants had a high school diploma, and only one had completed a GED. During the eight month research period, 12 of the 32 case study participants graduated from high school and 10 received GED certificates. Two former dropouts had reenrolled in high school, and two students were still enrolled, when the research ended. Only five of the case study participants left YEDPA programs with no diploma or equivalent credential, and two of these participants earned occupational training certificates while enrolled. Only one case study participant dropped out of school during the research period.

On first consideration, YEDPA participation seems to have had a dramatic impact on educational attainment and school completion within the case study group. But how much of the educational progress made by the case study participants can actually be attributed to YEDPA participation? The answer is not simple or clear, but it appears that program participation exerted a stronger influence on the educational credentialing and school status of the dropouts than it did on that of the students who had been continuously enrolled in school or who had reenrolled before applying to YEDPA programs.

When they applied to YEDPA programs, 16 of the case study participants were enrolled in school. Of this group, 13 were attending regular public high schools and three were attending alternative schools or high school equivalency programs. Two of these students were dropouts, who had returned to school on their own. Each of the continuous enrollees in the case study group had a strong personal commitment to high school completion before he or she joined the YETP program. This commitment was shared by the two returning dropouts, who had been effectively "sold" on the importance (or even necessity) of high school graduation.

It is not remarkable that all but one of these case study students went on to graduate or to progress toward school completion during their program participation cycles. YETP jobs supplied these participants with needed income and work experience, which they might otherwise have had difficulty attaining. But all of the students said that they would have remained in school until graduation even if they had no jobs or income. Nine of these students intended to go on to college after high school graduation. When the research ended, five had actually made arrangements to begin college courses by the following fall term.

Half of the case study participants were high school dropouts, who were out of school when they enrolled in YEDPA programs. Eleven of these 16 participants were placed in full-time work experience, and they were encouraged, but not required, to attend GED preparation classes. The majority took advantage of the opportunity to earn a GED credential. Several of the dropouts said they had enrolled in YETP or YCCIP programs primarily to earn GED certificates, but most had some reservations about returning to the classroom.

Why did these participants decide to return to school despite their negative feelings about classroom settings? Several had decided that they wanted to go to college, and they needed a credential and better academic skills in order to gain entrance. Douglas Giscard said, "I'd like to get a degree in psychology or sociology, and I wanted to be ready to start when I pleased." Some participants felt a GED certificate would improve their job prospects. Jean Ansel said, "I knew I needed a high school diploma or GED to qualify for a regular job at the school. So I was pretty eager to get it." Sven Latoka felt that the skills he learned in GED instruction might improve his performance on the job: "I think this job really requires some education. Carpenters need good math and all that." Harold Thomas wanted to be accepted in the Army, and he had been told by the recruiter that he needed a GED in order to qualify for special training assignments. Several participants said they returned to school for GED instruction because they just wanted to prove to their families or to themselves that they could do it. Though a few dropouts in the case study group returned to school on their own, most said that had they not been enrolled in YEDPA programs, they probably would not have studied for their GED examinations during the 1978-79 school year.

A substantial portion of the dropouts in the case study group, including some participants who left school as early as tenth grade and had been away for as long as two years, were able to pass their GED exams with only short term preparation and surprising ease. Nearly half of the dropouts obtained their GED certificates after less than six months of study. Several were able to prepare themselves successfully in less than three weeks. Most of the dropouts who were able to obtain the GED quickly were surprised at how painless the process was:

> I was really surprised at how light the classes were. I was supposed to take an eight week preparation course, and I prepared for approximately one week. They said it was all right; I could take the test. But I didn't take it for two or three months. I finally took it a couple weeks ago, and I passed all the exams within about three hours.
>
> Douglas Giscard

> I did my classes right here at the CETA office. We went every day for two hours. Monday through Friday. I think I went for about eight weeks. I found the tests pretty easy. I was real surprised; cuz I'd talked to friends, and they'd said it wasn't real hard, but it took a long time. I couldn't believe that I got it so fast. The only thing I really needed to brush up on was the math.
>
> Jack Thrush

> I took a sixteen week course. It was easier than school, I think, but I did study for it at home, you know. I wanted to get it over with as fast as I could. It took awhile, but I got it.
>
> Sven Latoka

The participants who were able to complete their GED with relative ease were divided over the question of whether the GED certificate was really an acceptable equivalent of a high school diploma. Most felt that it might represent about the same level of skills that an average student would have graduating from a general program in most high schools. As Douglas Giscard said, "It sure didn't cover all the college prep material." Some of the GED completors felt that employers might not think their certificate was "as good as a diploma." Six of the ten GED completors said they would like to go to college at some time in the future. They all agreed that the GED would "get you into any junior college", but several worried about whether it would be acceptable for admittance to other colleges or universities.

Other dropouts in the case study group who were younger or less academically proficient went into longer term, more structured educational programs. These programs generally held classes about four hours a day, on a daily basis, and operated nine months a year like regular school programs. But class size was typically much smaller than that of public schools, and most participants felt that they were able to learn better and faster because of the individual attention they received. Several participants especially liked the fact that their classes were not competitive and each student could work at his or her own pace.

Bobby Jones was able to read when he enrolled in a Boston YIEPP project, but he had substantial skill deficiencies in nearly all academic areas. He had dropped out of ninth grade over two years before. Bobby received remedial education and GED instruction in a YIEPP classroom each day. After nine months in the project, Bobby decided to go back to West Roxbury High School and try to get a regular diploma. His substantial skill improvement enabled him to move into the 12th grade after leaving the project. Bobby said:

> It was so long since I was in school that I don't really remember if it was harder or easier than this. But I'll tell you one thing; in here, we do more work than I ever did in a long time. We got one teacher, right? He gets around to all of us, too, you know? Like he talks to us, and he goes over the work with us. He says, "Anyone have any problems, you know you can come to me for help individually."
>
> I got the extra help here that I needed, you know, from missin' all that school. There wasn't many people in the class, so the teacher can help me. When I was in school before, I wouldn't ask the teacher for nothin'. If I

> didn't know it; I just didn't do it. That was a big mistake. I think I'll do much better in school this time around.

Before joining the YETP program, Patty Monson enrolled in an alternative high school that provided instructors for individual consultation and direction and allowed students to work at home, at their own pace. Patty was doing well in her studies there and expected to receive her high school diploma in March 1980, 18 months after the time she enrolled. Patty said she preferred the home study program to her previous high school experience:

> The work is just about right. It gives me something I have to work for. But I know I can get there if I try enough. Not something out of my reach. I can do it... The individual study is the best part. It's the way I always wanted, you know. I couldn't talk to the teachers in the classroom. Now it's just me and the teacher--without a bunch of other kids sitting around looking on. I think most people would rather do it that way. I get more done doing it by myself than in a classroom. Especially when there were discussions...I could never take part in a class discussion. I hated them. I get more out of this.

How did those case study participants who transferred directly from regular high school into alternative education programs compare the two? How satisfied were they with their alternative school experiences? Felisa Santana believes that she probably got more individual attention at the bilingual community based school than she would have in a large public high school. She liked attending classes in the morning and working for pay in the afternoons. But she said that she "regrets a hundred times" not getting a regular high school diploma. She didn't get any instruction in the sciences, and she got only basic Math and English courses in addition to vocational secretarial training. Felisa was able to secure a full-time job upon completion; but she doesn't think she was prepared well academically, and she feels she lacks the proper credentials for college.

Luanne Clawson transferred from West Roxbury High into the same YIEPP project that Bobby Jones attended. She felt that she learned more in the YIEPP project classes than she had been learning in public school, and she was also able to gain work experience in her intended career field as well. Luanne wants to attend junior college. After six months in the YIEPP program, she decided to go back to West Roxbury for her senior year. The major reason for returning, Luanne said, was that she didn't want to miss her graduation the following year.

Lynn Hazelton decided to go back to regular high school because she had heard that a "real diploma is better than a GED." She found it hard to fit in at school. "Most of the people at school were like 15, 16 years old," Lynn said. "Even the older ones are still like kids. It's really strange going back to school after you've been out a while." While she was going to school, Lynn worked in a YETP job at a local hospital. She graduated in June 1979, but she was not really sure that going back to school had been such a good choice. She plans to work as a nurse's aide, a job for which a diploma offers no special advantages over a GED certificate. She said, "I would probably have been better off working full-time and getting the extra experience. But maybe someday I'll want to go to college or something."

There was a small group of participants who were never successfully involved in GED preparation or high school completion before or during their time as YEDPA participants. Yvette McDermott by-passed high school completion in favor of occupational training and a key punch operator's certificate. Yvette said she might get a GED certificate in the future if she feels that she needs it. Sandy Bonds started a GED preparation program, but stopped going because she "couldn't stand sitting in class after working all day." Sandy doesn't plan to go back to school unless she has to. She said, "I'll learn the stuff I need to know, but I don't need some little letter that says I did it." Carrie Green and Carmeletta DeVries both dropped out of GED preparation when they left their YEDPA jobs. Each young woman said that she plans to get her GED certificate someday, but both are currently more interested in finding full-time work.

Personal Growth and Self-Esteem

One kind of development that rarely gets consideration in employment and training program evaluations is personal growth and improvement in participant self-esteem. Most of the case study participants believed that their YEDPA experiences had a positive influence on their personal lives, their levels of self-confidence, and their ability to understand themselves and others.

Patty Monson felt that her YETP job broadened her horizons and helped her to develop self-discipline. She said:

> All I ever did before I started working was sit around the house. Do housework and watch soap operas, you know? This job got me out--away from the television. It got my mind working and helped me learn how to utilize my time and not just waste it.

A number of case study participants felt that some of the major benefits of program participation were improvements in their communication skills, understanding of others, and personal outlooks on life that came from exposure to new people and situations. Todd Clinton said that his interaction with his CETA counselor and his experiences with customers at the cosmetology school taught him "how to look at people different ways, how to relate to them, and how to handle my own attitude." Linda Larsen said the most important thing she learned from her YETP job was "how to understand people better." She said:

> It's helped me a lot. I can deal with people so much better. I think I'm easier with people now...to speak and carry on a conversation. I can understand where they're coming from.

Some of the participants experienced improvements in self-image because of their new identities as workers. Jessica Jackson felt that her friends and classmates looked at her with more respect after she started her job at the hospital:

> After fourth period, I would change into my uniform for work. And people would see me in the hall and say, "Oh, you're working at the hospital? That's so neat! Do you like it?" Most people I know, they didn't really take me as a serious person. I guess some people didn't think I could keep my job for long. When I did, it was like I proved that I was a reliable person.

The majority of the case study participants felt that they had worked hard and tried their best to learn and succeed in their YEDPA jobs. Such efforts typically resulted in feelings of growth and accomplishment. Even participants like Jack Thrush and Carmeletta DeVries, who did not feel their own performance had been all that it could be, still reported learning some positive things about themselves from YEDPA activities. For participants, like Heidi Clark and Jean Ansel, who had accomplished individual objectives through their work assignments, there was the strong sense of satisfaction that comes from a job well done. Heidi said:

> I feel really good about things...about myself. I feel I've really opened up...started new things...followed through with them. I've accomplished a lot that I wanted to do. And I feel satisfied that I've done them well.

Career Plans and Life Goals

The case study participants have decades of worklife ahead of them. What do they expect the future to hold? When they entered YEDPA programs, few of the participants had realistic career goals. Most had only limited knowledge of occupational alternatives. Program participation typically did not include exposure to a broad range of career alternatives. But in formulating career plans, the identification of personal abilities, preferences, and life expectations seems to be at least as important as vocational exposure, selection, and preparation. Young people must discover who they are and what they want from life in order to make best use of education, employment, and training opportunities. Effective career planning requires a long-range perspective. An 18 or 19 year old cannot count on spending 40 years, or more, of future worklife in one occupation or vocational area. He or she must be prepared instead for effective lifetime management of career related decisions.

During their YEDPA program participation cycles, most of the young people in the case study group began to think more seriously about career objectives. On the basis of their own exposure to new work roles, or through career counseling on an individual or group basis, many began to make personal plans for their own worklives. By the time the Youth Perspectives interviews were completed, most case study participants had terminated or were nearing program completion. Most had either obtained a GED or were just graduating from high school. About half of the participants had, what seemed to be, viable career plans. A viable career plan included the identification of personal life goals and priorities, the selection of provisional occupational or vocational objectives, accurate knowledge and some understanding of the steps required to achieve these objectives, and the capability to begin putting plans into practice upon program termination, through individually maintained employment or education activities.

Off To A Good Start

Nearly one-third of the young people in the case study group have personal career plans that key directly off their experiences as YEDPA participants. Some, like Sven Latoka and Patty Monson, had selected occupational objectives prior to program enrollment. Others, like Felisa Santana and Heidi Clark, were introduced to new occupational alternatives through program participation. But all of the young people in this portion of the case study group felt they learned enough about their occupational choices while in the program to make commitments and to take initial steps toward achieving vocational goals.

For some participants, like Richard Nielsen and David Anderson, further education is the most important step in realizing future career objectives. These young men plan to support themselves with part-time semi-skilled jobs while they earn college credentials that will enable them to enter their chosen vocations. Some participants, like Felisa Santana and Jean Ansel, hope to achieve their career objectives through a combination of post-secondary schooling and full-time employment in career related jobs. Other participants, like Todd Clinton, Sven Latoka, and Sandy Bonds, plan to move directly into their selected occupations and pursue vocational success through post-program employment experiences. The time frame for achieving career objectives and the relative degree of aspiration varies considerably within this group, but each of the participants has linked vocational objectives with personal goals and feels confident that he or she can pursue both on an independent basis.

Jean Ansel, Felisa Santana, and Heidi Clark were all hired as regular employees by the agencies for which they had worked as YETP participants. Each young woman completed high school or GED requirements and plans to remain in her job while pursuing further training or education. Heidi hopes to take advantage of training opportunities within the U.S. Forest Service. She wants a career involvement in environmental management and would like to become a field technician with the agency. Both Jean and Felisa have career aspirations that imply an eventual change of employer. Felisa plans to take evening college courses while working as a billing clerk for the neighborhood health clinic where she is now employed. Within five years, she would like to be working as a travel agent in an airport. Jean also plans to continue her schooling. She is not certain how long she will remain in her current position:

> I know I want to work with either deaf or handicapped people. I want to be an expert at sign language, and that takes years of experience. I'm getting good experience here, but I work with the really slow kids and their language is limited. That's why I want to try and see if I can get into the higher level--work with kids at the high school level here. If I was offered a job interpreting for deaf adults, I would take it. But as far as I know now, I'm staying here and working with children and teaching them. And for schooling...I plan to stay in night school at the community college. I'd like to get an interpreting license. You really only need that if you are going to interpret legal things. But you can use it in schools or anywhere else like that.
>
> Here at the school, I'm only getting about $150 more a month than when I was on CETA. We all complain because, you know, we're actually sitting there *teaching* the children all day and yet we get paid less than half what the "teachers" make. They don't even think up the program either--we've got still another person who is doing nothing but writing it out on paper. Still, the work here... it's been really great for me. I'll keep my eyes open for better opportunities, but I'm in no big hurry to leave.

Sven Latoka received carpentry training from his father before he enrolled in a YCCIP renovation project. But he lacked the experience, credentials, and age to secure employment on his own in construction. After working seven months in the project and securing a GED, Sven plans to get a full-time job as a carpenter:

> I want work that I enjoy, a good job to support a family someday, and I think that I can get there with carpentry. I like carpentry cuz you do different things all the time. If you do the same thing, it's in a different area...never the *exact* same thing. There's good money in carpentry if you can do it. And I plan to work *real* hard. I know I can get a future going with it, too. Because I was only here one month when I got promoted, and there were people here in my group that had been working since the program opened. He put me supervisor cuz he knows I do good work. You know, I'm pretty smart with the work--

> figuring out the cutting and what to do. I learn quick too. I've had the chance to learn almost all of what there is to do. Only thing I haven't really done is build a house.
>
> I'm sure that I can find a job. Once any carpenter or contractor gives me a chance, I'll move up quick. I'll probably get only four dollars an hour to start with. With my experience and with the stuff I know, I should make six bucks an hour. But I'd start at minimum wage--it would hold me over for a while--but then I expect good raises coming. I suppose what I'll probably get is four or five dollars. Unless I get a job down at Blake Shipyard. You get about eight dollars to start down there. I put my name in there, but it's just unbelievable... they got four filing cabinets full of names. I'm not really waiting for them to call me. But if they did, I'd jump right on that. That's a career right there. But I'll make a career as a carpenter with no problem. Cuz I'm a hard worker. I know that. When my boss says to go, you know, I'll be the first one up to grab something and get to work.

Sandy Bonds also plans to work in carpentry after she leaves the home repair project, where she has been a participant for nearly one year. She feels that she lacks the interest, drive, and stamina for heavy construction work. She'd like to refine her skills as a finish carpenter, and she has talked to a cabinet maker about taking her on as an assistant when she leaves the project. Doing work she enjoys is more important to Sandy than becoming a financial "success". Sandy says:

> I'm not one of those people that have to bring themselves up higher and higher to feel successful. I just want to be happy where I am. I mean, day by day...work where I'm happy at, live where I'm happy at, and that's about it, really. I just like working. I'd like to be a finish carpenter, you know, tables, desks and cabinets. I don't expect to make much while I'm working up my skills. I'll probably never make much money. But it's no big deal to me. I'm forced into that whole thing about having to have money to live. Everybody is. But I'm not going to knock myself out to get rich. It's not all that big a deal.
>
> To me, working at what I like and doin' it on my own, independently, is what makes me happy--makes me feel successful. I mean, a lot of people think that you're not really successful until you're President of the United States or something, but, you know, I don't think that's true. It depends on the person. Some people have

> high hopes and all that shit for their lives and some people don't. If you wanna get real deep and heavy... I think everybody's been kinda trained and had it grounded into their mind that you gotta be successful and keep moving up the ladder to enjoy life. I don't think that's true at all. It's hard for me to explain this...but if I wanna move up the scale or something, I will. But I don't feel that I have to.

David Anderson and Richard Nielsen have career aspirations in occupational areas that are very different from those in which they worked as YEDPA participants. Both young men worked part-time in semi-skilled jobs while attending high school, and both plan to continue the same kind of work while they attend college. Richard Nielsen is working as a janitor while he studies electronics at Portland Community College. He would like to become an electronic technician and hopes to make about $14,000 a year when he gets out of school. David Anderson discovered his aptitude as a mechanic when he was employed as a YETP aide in his school's bus garage. But he also excels in math, and he wants to become an accountant. He plans to work as an auto mechanic in a local garage while he completes a college degree. David says that he settled on accounting because it is an occupation in which he can use his natural abilities and will be able to get a high paying job after only four years of college.

Todd Clinton is a hair stylist. His career is just beginning. He received classroom training while enrolled in the YETP program. During his 12 months as a YEDPA participant, he completed cosmetology school, and he's been working as a hair stylist for less than three months. Beginning stylists don't make much money. At this stage, Todd is still working part-time in construction to support himself and his new wife. But Todd takes a broad view of his future. Hair design is not just a job for him; it's a challenge that combines career potential with the opportunity for artistic expression:

> I want to have a shop of my own someday. I want to be different--not weird or anything. But I want to be good and to be different too. To create hair designs that nobody else does--that nobody else can do. Hopefully, I can make the hair industry something better. Because it's changed in the past ten years. It's gone from the guys who were seen as sissys when they started, to lots of men going into it seriously. It's not a sissy business anymore. It's a very competitive business, and a very, uh, egotistic business. Everybody's got an ego in this business. I'm no exception. You have to prove that you're good. That takes time.
>
> Right now I'm working in a job where the pay is terrible. I'll admit it--it's rotten! But I'm learning from two people who graduated from the best hair design school in the world. I may not ever have that diploma, but I will

> have that knowledge. I'll have all the techniques that they know. And that is going to better me. I met Paul and Louis three months before I graduated from cosmetology school through a guy I went to school with. I became a model in a hair show they were doing. From that day, when I saw the stuff they did at the hair show, I said: "This is it! This is the kind of stuff I want to do." I was lucky to get on with stylists of this quality. But it takes about a year, maybe a year and a half, to build up your clientele.
>
> I always wanted to go to New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles. But lately--especially ever since I got married--I've calmed down more. I would like to go to the Oregon Coast. I'd like to own my own salon there. I want an A-frame salon, and I want an A-frame house. I want two kids. And I want to live where there isn't a lot of pollution--where I can raise my kids the way I want to raise them. My wife and I have talked about it--she's a hair stylist too, but she's still in school--and we figure about five years in Portland. It will take at least that long before we know enough to start our own shop. To be happily married and to raise kids is the most important thing. I want to own my own salon, but I don't need to be on top. I just want to live and be happy. I don't expect to make $50,000 a year. But I do want to be noticed, and have people say: "I know him. He's a good stylist." But I don't want the...the brown-nosing that sometimes goes along with it. And I don't want to have to buy my way into anything. I want to make it because I'm a good hair stylist--that only.

Among those in the case study group with workable career plans were a number of young women who expected to be secretaries. Patty Monson, Luanne Clawson, Joy Tippets, and Tina Middleton gained experience and learned office skills through part-time YEDPA jobs as clerical aides. As a YETP participant, Yvette McDermott was enrolled full-time in a 16 week classroom training program in keypunch operation. Each of the young women was interested in developing clerical skills when she enrolled as a program participant. Luanne, Joy, and Tina had taken typing and other related classes in school. Yvette's sister-in-law is a key punch operator. She told Yvette how much she enjoyed her job, so Yvette decided to try it out. Patty Monson had no previous training, but her YETP counselor arranged for her to take community college secretarial classes in conjunction with part-time work experience.

All of these young women feel confident that they learned enough as program participants to be able to get some kind of clerical position on their own after program completion and/or high school graduation. Yvette completed training before the youth perspectives interviews ended and she was hired as a full-time key punch operator at a university. Patty planned to spend several more months in clerical training and YETP work experience. The other young women were just beginning their job search.

These young women don't expect to make much above minimum wage--at least during the first year or two on the job--but each says that she enjoys the work and office environment enough to consider making it her career. Each of them places security and happy family life above individual career advancement. Yvette is married and has one son. Patty is engaged and also has a child. The three others expect to marry sometime in the next five years. Though all plan to continue working after marriage, in some ways these young women fit within the traditional pattern of the secondary wage earner. Joy Tippet's comments are typical of this group of female participants:

> I like to work, and I enjoy doing office work. But mainly I want to be happy. I really don't care how much money I make, just as long as I'm happy with what I'm doing. I plan on living in a small community, in an average-size house. I want to get married and have kids. I'd like my husband to have a good job. But it's hard nowadays...in most families, you really need two people working, I think.

Indefinite Plans

Some participants did not develop personal career plans during the time they were enrolled in YEDPA programs. About one-third of the youth perspectives participants terminated or neared program completion with no vocationally based career goals and with limited immediate employment prospects. The lack of definite career plans was not viewed as a problem by the few, like Jessica Jackson, who planned to go directly on to college. Jessica wants to find out more about the alternatives before she settles on an occupational objective, and she believes that she has enough work experience to qualify for some kind of part-time job while she attends community college. But for other young people, like Jack Thrush, Genetta Burke, Carrie Green, and Mark Gurney, who do not plan post-secondary schooling, the situation is more critical. Though most of the participants in this group feel that they benefitted from their experiences in YEDPA programs, they still face uncertain employment futures. Some do not seem equipped, on their own, to avoid unemployment, underemployment, or welfare dependency.

Several of these participants say that their YEDPA work experience gave them a chance to try out occupational roles and discover what they didn't like about them. Both Carrie Green and Lori Wozisky were placed in clerical aide positions. Each feels that she learned a lot while in the YETP or YCCIP program, but neither wants to continue doing clerical work. Carrie quit her job on a problem-ridden YCCIP project after six months. When the Youth Perspectives interviews ended, she had been looking for work on her own for over ten weeks with little success. Now that she is 18, Carrie hopes to get hired for better paying factory work, but one prospective job fell through when her former YCCIP supervisor gave her a poor employment reference. This is what Carrie says about her employment goals:

> From the clerical job I had, I learned that it takes a lot of training to be really good. If I wanted to work in an office, I'd have to get my GED and then go on to college and take typing, bookkeeping, and shorthand. I'd rather work in a factory than in an office, anyway. In an office you're sitting down all the time, but in the factory you're standing up and working with your hands. And the money's better in a factory. That's really important to me cuz I'd like to get lots of things. My sister, she's almost 25 and still livin' at home. By that time, I wanna have a house--even if I have to struggle to work for it. So maybe it has to be a factory job, which I don't really want to do, but I'll resort to for awhile cuz it's really good money. It will get me by.
>
> What I'd really like is to find a job that I could be happy with...you know, satisfied with for awhile. Cuz most jobs that I've had, I haven't been happy with. Like at the university, I don't know why, but they treated you lower cuz you were under CETA. Now if I could of got hired there and I wasn't in the CETA program, maybe it would have been different.
>
> I have a chance to get into Clark Company, cuz my dad knows the production manager there. They pay $5.85 an hour. But I wouldn't really want to work the machines there. You got to know what you're doing, because my cousin got a piece of metal right through his hand doing that. What I'd be doing is...like the stock would come out, whatever it is, and I'd bag it and pack it, or maybe feed the machine the material. That wouldn't be too bad.

Lori Wozisky left her clerical aide position for a nighttime cashier job at the Jiffy Market. Three summers and several school months of part-time clerical work as a program participant had convinced Lori that she didn't want to be a secretary. She wanted to try something new. At first Lori liked her cashier job because it kept her busy and she got to meet people. But, as graduation neared, she became dissatisfied with the working conditions and pay at the Jiffy Market:

> I don't really want to keep the job I've got now. This store gets robbed all the time. And I don't really like the part about being on my feet for seven hours straight. I'm just getting minimum wage, and I've been there four months. Even though I'm working 40 hours a week, I don't really bring home a good paycheck. I don't like the idea of factory work, but I'm gonna give it a try. I'd like to make at least $4.65 an hour. I've put in applications at all different factories. But if nothing comes through, I guess I'll just have to stay here.

During the nine months she participated in a YCCIP weatherization project, Genetta Burke was exposed to a non-traditionally female occupation, learned some new skills, earned a wage, and completed a GED. But her employment future is still uncertain. She does not want to go into weatherization or construction work. She would like some other kind of training, but she has no definite career goals at this point in time:

> I wanna get into another trainin' program. They was supposed to be gettin' me into some kind of school for...I don't know, whatever I wanted to do for training after this project ends. I'm still thinkin' about that. I've worked--here and other places--but I haven't done really the things that I want to do. I don't remember seein' anything particular that I'm really interested in.
>
> My project supervisor wants me to go to executive typing school. He wants me to be an executive secretary...You know, when I was goin' to high school, I wanted to be a secretary, and I took up typin' for two years. But, um, now I changed my mind. I don't know now...I don't think I have the patience. I don't think I'd like somebody dictatin' to me. Sittin' in an office all day...I'd go crazy. Henry always says I think *I* should be the boss--I have problems with my attitude. I'd rather be workin' with kids--little kids, you know? Babies or retarded kids...I think maybe I'd be good at that.
>
> I'd like to get off welfare. I like workin'. I'll probably always work at somethin'. But for now...I mean, just to make what I need...I'm not even doin' that good, but without welfare I'd need to make at least $5 an hour. I don't think right now I could get a job that paid that much.

Carmeletta DeVries is another young mother who is hesitant to leave the relative security of welfare for the uncertainties she would face in the labor market. Carmeletta left her YETP job in a hospital cafeteria with no real career plans. She is a high school dropout, with few skills, only limited work experience, and little idea what she would like to do with her future:

> I want to get my GED for one thing. And I'd like to move out of my sister's house, try to get an apartment, and get, you know, just pretty much straightened around. I want to try to get my driver's license and get me some kind of small car that'll get me around. I'd like to get a job that paid five or six dollars an hour, cuz I don't want to be on AFDC, I don't like that. I want to try to be out on my own. I would do any kind of work really. All they have to do is teach me if that's what it takes. It wouldn't make no difference really as long as I knew what I was supposed to be doing. I used to type some.

> I can type pretty fast--if I look at the keys. You know, I have to read the whole sentence and then type it out. I want to get more education. I do plan to get my GED sometime, but I don't know if I'll be able to go on after that.

During the year and a half that he was a YETP participant, Mark Gurney received work experience as a janitorial aide, audio-visual trainee, and day-care aide. All of his part-time jobs were in non-profit agencies that were not able to offer participants transition to regular employment status. Mark does not believe that his YETP experiences will help him to get employment in the rural Kalamazoo County area where he lives. When he finally graduated from high school at age 20, Mark was not able to find full-time work.

> I been applying to all kinds of places, tryin' to find a job, so I can save up some money and leave here. But nobody calls back. I'd really work at almost anything, but what I'd like to be is some kind of manager...like a store or something. I think I could do pretty good at managin' a store. I'd like to make about $4.50 an hour. I don't care if I'm gonna get rich or anything, but I would like to be comfortable. Be able to run my own life completely...have my own house and my own land. I don't know how to get that really. But something has to turn up if I keep on lookin'.

Two young men in the case study group enlisted in the Army after termination from YEDPA programs. Both were uncertain about their career objectives. Harold Thomas enrolled in a YCCIP weatherization project for three months in order to support himself while getting a GED certificate that would enable him to enter the full-time Army on favorable terms. He had previously spent time in the Army Reserves. Harold doesn't know what he wants to do with his future worklife. His main goal was to "get out of Boston." He hopes that his experience in the Army will help him to decide on a career:

> That's where I can find myself. That's why I can hardly wait to go back--to find myself--to find out what I really want to do. I know I'm good at music and art. Nobody can take that away from me. But I don't expect to make a livin' that way. I'll be in the Army four years. If I like it, I'll just re-enlist for another year. Then if I don't like it, I'll just go to college, and they'll pay part of my educational fees. From there...maybe I'll be about ready to die (laughter)...I'll be too old for anything else!

While Harold hopes to find himself in the Army, Jack Thrush sees Army enlistment as both a last resort and a test of himself. Jack knows that he has problems with self-discipline and communication. He left school because of his dislike of its authoritarian structure, and he walked away from several jobs without communicating his dissatisfaction to his supervisors. Jack dropped out of the YETP program with no immediate employment prospects. He feels that he failed to make the best use of his opportunities as a program participant. But he plans to succeed in the Army, and he hopes it will give him a start on a better life:

> I been thinkin' about it a long time. I'm real tired of screwin' up all the time. I know a lot of people who've been in the Army and it seems to get them straightened out some. My counselor talked to me about it, and that made me think more about it. I called the recruiter a couple times and talked to him about it, you know. Last week I just went down there. I wanted to look into it really heavy, and I did and decided I wanted to join up.
>
> I've thought about it, you know, am I going to be able to handle it, from not having had all that much discipline before and all. But I think I might be able to accept it because I've never accepted it before. It might be something new. I don't know, but I'm gonna give it my best shot. It's the last thing I can think of. And I really want it. I don't wanta screw up at all. I've thought of the bad things that could happen--suppose I ended up in Fort Leavenworth, or got a bad discharge or somethin'? But I've been tryin' to think more or less positive.
>
> I don't know what I'll do when I get out. I hope I'm in a better position. I like to have my own house someday, and a really nice job, and maybe a family. I think I'd like an outdoor job. And I don't want to live anywhere near the city. I feel like the future's gonna be kinda unsteady for me, and I'm not sure what's gonna happen...I hope things are better when I get out of the Army.

High Aspirations

The young person with exceptionally high aspirations or the desire for a career that will bring great wealth, status, or fame presents a particular challenge to employment counselors. Nobody wants to discourage ambition. But there is no plan that, however faithfully followed, will insure success as an entertainer, fashion designer, writer, or professional athlete. Even young people whose talent in such areas is recognized and developed at an early age are often advised to make some provisions for alternative employment. Some young people see themselves as future doctors, lawyers, or architects--though they have never done well in school and have little interest in academic pursuits. Others have the mental ability or academic potential to succeed in challenging careers, but their economic circumstances or personal priorities dictate a focus on more immediate employment objectives.

Some young people will struggle against overwhelming odds to realize what seem to be improbable goals, but most, with varying degrees of difficulty, will eventually settle, on their own, for more modest occupational roles.

About one-third of the youth perspectives participants entered YEDPA programs with some career goal in mind. Most of these goals were ambitious, but aspiring participants typically had only a very hazy concept of the prospects or means for achieving desired ends. Program participation caused some case study group members to focus on more practical career planning and to scale down their vocational expectations. Others maintained high aspirations but developed more realistic plans for pursuing longer range goals while meeting immediate economic needs. But several young people were more commited to the concept of success and wealth than they were to any specific vocational role; and though they gained experience in the program, they tended to leave with the same inflated expectations and no practical plans for employment or education.

Lui Hueyen wanted to be a fashion designer. Her father is a tailor, and Lui enjoys making most of her own clothes. But she never thought too seriously about how to go about realizing her career aspirations until her last year in high school. Lui is a good student and her parents have encouraged her to go to college. She considered taking design classes at the university after high school graduation, but decided to first find out more about the fashion industry. She read articles and sought out related information on her own. Meanwhile, Lui took a basic computer course in high school and was able to secure a part-time YETP job as a computer programmer aide. She enjoyed working with computers and discovered that both the career prospects and her capabilities in this field were good. In weighing the alternatives, Lui came to the following conclusions:

> I plan to go to the university and take Math. Also to find out more about the different skills involved with computer work, which I like. I think this will be a better career for me than fashion design. I don't want a job that is not too secure or has too much pressure. I want to be just myself...do a job that I enjoy. And have time for leisure. In some jobs, you have long hours. You have to look nice all the time--dress up--in some jobs. I would like to be more comfortable--just be neat and comfortable for work--that would be best for me.

Tina Middleton enjoyed her agriculture classes in high school, and she thought she might like to be a zoo technician or a biologist. The closest she ever got to this kind of work was her short stint in a YCCIP fisheries project. She also received work experience as a clerical aide at the county courthouse. As she neared graduation, Tina thought seriously about her vocational plans. She considered both the local employment prospects and her own priorities. Tina wants to stay in Kitsap County and to marry her boyfriend within a year or two. Nearly 70 percent of the jobs in Kitsap County are in government agencies. Tina decided the most practical plan was to seek secretarial work after graduation:

> I want to get married. I really want to get married to Rick. And I'd like to have a job. In other words, I just want to be happy. I just don't want to constantly be in a total uproar about everything, like...God! What's gonna happen now? I don't wanna be like that. I know that life can't always be smooth, but I think I would be happy with a really normal, regular life.
>
> I always said that I wanted to be a zoo technician, but there's not much call for that around here. Then I thought maybe I wanted to be a marine biologist. But after working at the fisheries, I know that I can't stand the smell of dead fish. That's one of the big things out there. Most of the jobs here are in offices or government agencies. And I like clerical work pretty well. I'm not a great typist or anything, but I'm pretty sure I could get hired at the courthouse. With a little luck, I should turn into a pretty good secretary.

Vivian Lincoln wants to be a doctor. She says she enrolled in the YETP program because she wanted to find out what it was like to work in a hospital. Vivian was only a junior in high school during the research period. Her grade average was a solid "C". Vivian has enjoyed her work as a hospital aide. She'd like to become a physician so that she could "help people, have respect, and a nice job with a good salary." (Vivian believes that starting physicians make $7,000 to $8,000 a year!) Vivian plans to go to college, and her family is willing to help her. But she says she had never thought much about grades, and she didn't realize that it could be difficult to get into medical school. "If I can't get my grades up by next year," Vivian says, "maybe I'll think about bein' a nurse instead."

Mark Westgate plans a career in the theatre, preferably as a musical comedy actor. He knows that this is a competitive field, but his talent, and his popular and critical success in local civic productions have given him some basis for his aspirations. Mark was awarded a vocal scholarship to a prestigious mid-west school. He plans to study geology as well as voice and acting at the university. At this stage, he wants to keep his career options open:

> I want to have some other interest, another occupation I can follow if my performing plans fall through. Whatever I end up doing, I want to contribute something. I want to know as many people as I can and have more people know me. I eventually see part of being happy as settling down with a steady job. I don't know if I'll ever be able to do that. But I'd like to build my own house some day. Collect art. I see myself in the future as having a lot of money, but I don't know if that's necessary. Being happy with yourself is more important, I mean, having enough self-confidence, self-assuredness

> that when you have a big setback you can still keep driving on. That to me is real happiness. I've achieved a lot now. I have more hurdles to achieve. I don't exactly know what they are, but once I get over those hurdles, I'll be content.

Douglas Giscard has done very well in the social service agency where he was placed as a YETP participant. He is able to relate easily to both the professional staff and the adolescent clients, and he has shown an aptitude for handling routine administrative chores. Douglas likes his work and plans to keep his job--at least for the time being. He once wanted to be a master jewel thief or a rock musician, and he says he still plans to make a million dollars. His current career goal is to create and administer an ideal social service agency:

> I'd like to work my tail off and keep moving up. With the ideas I have, I think I could make the perfect social service agency, or as close to it as possible...make it unique...set aside from the others. That's what I'd like to do. I don't know enough now to do it, but I'm learning. I feel confident that I will succeed. There will probably be people standing in my way. There always will be. You just have to step over them. I plan to get four years of college--maybe even more. That's anywhere within the next five to ten years. When I get the schooling that I need, I can go ahead. If I get the right grants... if I show them that this can work--the pros and the cons--show them what I have will really work better than other agencies that are around...they can't refuse me. They'll have to give me the financial backing and support that I need.

Tien Van Chin would like a career in international relations with the State Department. He plans to work his way through four years of university training, but feels his ambitions may be thwarted by his limited English skills and immigrant status, or by racial barriers. Meanwhile he has received training at a private business college, while enrolled in the YETP program, and he expects to find work as a computer programmer. Tien says:

> A career in international relations is my goal in life. To get chance to see many different places. Meet different kinds of people. Learn languages. See lots of different styles of life. But I'm not sure I can make it. Because, you know, is trouble concerned with race, here in United States. They say people have equal opportunity, but no. I never see top people in government departments, like Department of State, never see Chinese people. No. I believe that the country takes, what they say, "natural citizens" first...is custom from long time ago. Condition is getting better. You may work, but you might

> not get as high because you are not a natural American. Actions and speaking you must learn if you are not born American. Also English is a complicated language. I don't know if I can make it or not right now. First I plan to become American citizen. When I finish here, I will get job as computer operator and programmer. Then I'll go to the university.

Some participants expressed strong desires for recognition, wealth or fame, but had no practical plans for employment or schooling after leaving YEDPA programs. Linda Larsen says that money and success are her most important objectives. She is a good student and did extremely well in her YETP clerical job, but she left the program and graduated from high school with no immediate employment prospects. Linda does not yet have a driver's license, and she thinks she will have a hard time finding work in the small rural community where she lives. "I want to be a famous writer or a successful business executive," Linda says. "That sounds kind of silly, but I believe I could do it. I just don't know how to get started. I keep dreaming that someone will call me up and offer me this terrific job. But I know it doesn't happen that way." Linda thinks she will probably end up going to college, but she doesn't yet know how she will finance it.

Before he dropped out of school in the eleventh grade, Adam Sledge wanted to be an architect or a lawyer. "To do those things," Adam says, "all you have to do is get good grades and go through school." But Adam became impatient with high school; he wanted to be out in the world "making money." Adam was one of the best workers in his YCCIP weatherization project. He also managed to obtain a GED certificate and hold down an additional part-time job as a security guard in the project where he lives. Adam is ambitious, and he is a hard worker. But he doesn't have much knowledge of the working world on which to base his career aspirations:

> I've done so good here that I been thinkin' maybe I'd get into MIT or some other college and take up a degree in Weatherization. I'd like to go to school, but I want to make good money. I want ten dollars or something an hour and then go up higher. Stayin' alive is the main thing. The dollar...this day in time, that's what the world is built on. Everyone wants the dollar. I wanna be livin' it up when I'm older. Just doing what I want...whatever I felt in my mind to do. Ownin' me a car...diamonds... Cuz I know I'll have the money by then. I'll be more experienced.

Bobby Jones had his 19th birthday soon after our last interview. As an orphan, a ninth grade dropout with serious academic deficiencies, a juvenile offender, and a minority resident of an inner-city poverty neighborhood, Bobby faced formidable barriers to employment. He has never held an unsubsidized job. Before he quit school, Bobby decided that he wanted to be a professional athlete. But, after two years on the street, Bobby says he realized that he was going nowhere and needed to find a job or get back in school. As a YIEPP participant, Bobby attended remedial education classes and worked part-time. Though his duties as a sports reporter for a community center newsletter were limited, and he developed no marketable skills, he marks his YIEPP participation as a turning point in his life. After six months in a Boston YES project, Bobby improved his academic skills enough to be accepted back into high school on provisional terms as a 12th grade student. His goal remains a career in professional sports. Though his past school record is poor, he hopes to win an athletic scholarship to college. Bobby has only limited experience in high school and community sports competition, but he is convinced that he can achieve his goal:

> I don't think it's no way I couldn't make it. I don't. I guess I'll think about that when it happen. But now, I just don't believe it will go wrong...Once I get to college I know things will be hard. But, uh, you know, with help from the teachers and stuff like that, I'll make it okay. Once somebody shows me somethin' then it's easy for me to do...See, the better the people are, the better I play. It wouldn't be nothin' like that to stop me. I'll always have the tools. Any good coach could see it...any good coach.
>
> I want to be known--on the court or off the court. Be myself. Everyone likin' me. That's about it. Money is real important, because anything I want to do has to have money. I'd like to build a school named after me...an auditorium, you know. Lots of things. I'd like to work in poor areas or sections of states--especially here in Massachusetts...If I can play basketball or football... do well...have my skills brung out, everything 'll work out just fine.

New Ways to Look at Programs

Accountability has been a watchword in the relatively short history of federal employment and training programs. Taxpayers want to know how their dollars are being spent and what results are being achieved. Critics of government "give away" programs demand proof that human resource development efforts are cost-effective. Advocates want assurance that the special interest groups they represent are receiving a fair share of program funds and services. Congress, under pressure from critics and constituents, increasingly, is unwilling to authorize programs or allocate funds without specific provisions for control and accountability aimed at producing documented evidence of program effectiveness. The Administration and the Labor Department, eager to cite accomplishments, avoid abuses, and justify expenditures, require elaborate documentation from program sponsors, conduct performance reviews, and publish an array of evaluation reports.

YEDPA's high visibility and focus on innovation and demonstration mandated a particularly high level of concern with program assessment. YEDPA programs are probably the most extensively evaluated efforts in the past two decades of federal employment and training legislation. New information and reporting categories were incorporated into local data collection and monitoring systems to meet federal requirements for monthly and quarterly reports on YEDPA performance. Under special "knowledge development" provisions, local prime sponsors were requested to integrate evaluation methodologies into program initiatives from the outset in order to test and learn while doing. National evaluation and research teams were appointed to study different aspects of YEDPA programs.

Until recently, concern with manpower program accountability and evaluation has centered almost exclusively on quantitative assessment. Congress, the Administration, the Labor Department, national organizations, and concerned citizens all rely on statistical data for an understanding of program performance, problems, and outcomes. Local prime sponsors and program operators struggle to meet statistical reporting requirements and attempt to achieve quantitative performance goals that will represent their efforts in the best light to federal policy makers.

When the story is being told in quantitative terms, nobody can afford to ignore the numbers. But local program operators, counselors, trainers, and supervisors, who work most closely with participants, complain that the "numbers game" seems to have become the primary objective, and it squeezes the life and meaning out of their efforts to provide services to people in need. They worry that important program decisions affecting human lives are being made solely on the basis of statistical abstractions.

Nobody is suggesting that numbers be eliminated in program reporting and evaluation. Accountability, at all levels of program endeavor, requires that certain questions be answered in quantitative terms. Yet it is important to recognize the disparity between the knowledge we gain from an analysis of statistical program data and the human reality of what goes on in the lives of those affected by government programs. Statistics can tell us a lot about the characteristics of young people served by YEDPA programs, the amounts and categories of services delivered, the dollars spent, and the kinds of results achieved. But they don't tell us what program participation really meant for individuals like Bobby, Carmeletta, Jack, David, and Sandy. Quantitative evaluation and research techniques, alone, cannot tell us much about the needs, problems, concerns, experiences, outcomes, and aspirations of the people who participate in employment and training programs. For this kind of understanding, we must turn directly to the participants, and we must be willing and able to view life from their perspective.

YEDPA opened the door for employing new approaches in the qualitative research and evaluation of employment and training activities. In conjunction with traditional quantitative approaches, descriptive assessment tools, case studies, and other qualitative research techniques were encouraged. YEDPA placed a new emphasis on participant provided insights. Rather than being viewed in merely statistical terms as the passive "inputs" and "outputs" of programs, YEDPA participants, like Bobby, Carmeletta, Jack, David, and Sandy, were seen as active human resources, who should be considered and consulted in the design, operation, and evaluation of program activities. Perhaps, in the final analysis, this aspect of YEDPA will be its most important contribution to the employment and training program environment.

APPENDIX

The Youth Perspectives Project

The Youth Perspectives Project began with a series of open questions rather specific assumption to be tested or theories to be proven. What is it like to be young, poor, and unemployed in the United States today? What kinds of young people become participants in employment and training programs? How do youth participants perceive their roles in their families, communities, and schools? Do they believe these institutions are preparing them for labor market entry? How do these young people find out about the working world? What kinds of barriers do they face in launching their own work lives? What roles do youth employment and training programs play in their processes of work establishment?

My interest in these broad questions grew out of several years of involvement in the study and assessment of youth employment and training activities. As a research consultant, I had worked with employment and training agencies at the federal, state, and local levels of government. I had the opportunity to review program legislation and regulations. I examined program plans and performance data. I traveled to different areas of the country and observed projects, program approaches, and service delivery systems in operation. I talked to policy makers, planners, administrators, and program operators, as well as program counselors, teachers, employers, and worksite supervisors. From these experiences I learned a lot about youth employment and training programs--their purposes, design, implementation, and operation, but I felt that I knew relatively little about the people they served.

The participant is the most critical element in the employment and training universe. Programs are authorized, designed, and operated with his or her needs in mind. The educators and employment and training professionals with whom I had worked were, almost without exception, concerned about the problems of young people in the labor market. Their aim was to provide services that would increase employment opportunities and improve employment prospects for youth. Many of these people work directly with youth participants. From my contact with them, I was able to learn something about the circumstances, problems, and perspectives of young people involved in youth employment and training activities. But my own contact with participants was limited.

In November, 1977, I began working on a National Council on Employment Policy directed study of the implementation and operation of Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) programs by CETA prime sponsors. Over an 18 month period, ten researchers studied the evolution and progress of YEDPA activities in a total of 37 prime sponsorships in 12 states. Each researcher, in this DOL funded effort, was responsible for a series of case study reports examining YEDPA activities in three to five prime sponsorships. As researchers, we were encouraged to interview youth program participants, as well as planners, administrators, educators and program staffs, and to incorporate participant perspectives into our case studies of local program systems.

The interviews I held with YEDPA enrollees in NCEP case study sites in Oregon and Washington constituted the most direct and intensive contact I had yet experienced with youth participants. This interaction provided insights that altered my own perspective on youth employment and training programs. The experience triggered my interest in developing a research project that would focus directly on the perspectives, characteristics and experiences of young people enrolled in YEDPA programs.

The proposal for the Youth Perspectives Project was based, in part, on two rather rudimentary "discoveries" that had emerged forcefully from my recent contacts with YEDPA participants. First, I had found that these young people were, by and large, interested in employment and training related issues and willing to share their own experiences and views. Most participants with whom I had talked were excellent sources of information about themselves and their own labor market preparation and employment experiences, and many were astute observors of program activities and environments as well. Secondly, it had become clear to me that participant based perspectives and experiences that could be productively tapped for research purposes extended well beyond the perameters of program participation. Family circumstances, personal characteristics, school and community life, and other experiences and connections were all important elements in participants' lives. Moreover these non-program factors seemed to be closely related to the employment problems, plans, and prospects of young people.

The desire to identify some of the effects, or potential effects, of YEDPA program experiences on participants was an underlying motivation for the Youth Perspectives Project. But it seemed apparent that a study of program experiences and their effects from a participant perspective should also consider a wider range of individual circumstances and experiences, both within and outside the institutions that are supposed to prepare young people for work. By examining participant program experiences in relationship to family, community, school, and other factors, I hoped to achieve a clearer view of the kinds of impact program participation could have on individual lives. The baseline objective was to find out more about YEDPA participants, their individual circumstances and the meanings they attach to them. Developing case studies of selected participants seemed to be the best way to tap into the vast and diverse resevoir of participants' experience and perception.

For a number of reasons, I chose the intensive interview approach as the primary method for collecting case study material. Perhaps foremost was my belief that verbal interaction on a face-to-face basis is an effective way for people to get to know one another, and that in such encounters, one can at least begin the process of understanding the life circumstances, experiences, values, and aspirations of people who would otherwise remain strangers. Individual interviews spaced over an eight or nine month period seemed to offer the means for establishing rapport, exploring a wide range of material, testing understanding, and considering subjective meanings. A series of interviews, augmented by consultations with program staffs, would provide the material for an in-depth profile on each case study participant.

Participant and Site Selection

It was clear from the outset that monetary and time constraints, and the use of the intensive interview approach by a single researcher, would restrict the number of young people that could be included in the case studies and limit the number of locations from which they could be drawn. Within practical limitations, my aim in the selection of participants and geographic sites for the Youth Perspectives Project was to encompass a variety of individual characteristics, life circumstances, labor market conditions, and types of program activities. A case study group of 40 YEDPA participants was selected from preliminary interviews with 160 young people in four geographic locations: Kitsap County, Washington; Kalamazoo County, Michigan; Boston, Massachusetts; and Portland, Oregon.

These four prime sponsorships encompass a variety of residential settings, such as: sparsely populated rural areas, small and medium sized cities, suburbs, and major urban centers. They also represent a mixture of labor market and economic conditions that influence youth employment opportunities. At the time the Youth Perspectives Project was launched, Boston's general unemployment rate was the highest of the four areas. Employment opportunities in the private sector were especially restricted for young men and women in low income, inner city neighborhoods. Jobs for young people were also in short supply in the rural environs of Kalamazoo and Kitsap County. The youth employment situation was less critical in the cities of Portland and Kalamazoo. The scale of CETA operations within the four prime sponsorships ranged from a very small system in Kitsap County, which serves a largely white population distributed thinly over a fairly wide geographic area, to Boston's massive employment and training system, which serves a high percentage of non-white participants heavily concentrated in low income neighborhoods. Each of the four prime sponsors operated both YETP and YCCIP programs during fiscal year 1978. Boston was the only prime sponsorship with a Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Program (YIEPP).

Though the Youth Perspective research sites span the country from east to west and encompass a range of different residential settings, labor market conditions, programs, and service delivery models, they are clearly not an optimal geographic representation of the country. Two of the four sites are on the West Coast and all are in the North. Though I would have liked to achieve a better geographic balance, I found it necessary to limit the selection to sites within reasonable traveling range from Seattle and to prime sponsorships in which I had already established, or could most easily initiate, productive relationships with youth program staffs. Each of the four sites selected for the Youth Perspectives Project had also been included in the National Council on Employment Policy directed YEDPA program study. Consequently, case studies on the design, implementation, and operation of YEDPA program activities were available and provided a basis for understanding program strategies and delivery approaches in each of the four prime sponsorships.

Youth program staff contacts in the four prime sponsorships distributed information on the Youth Perspectives Project to YEDPA delivery agents and project operators and helped to set up preliminary interviews with program participants. Rather than hand picking participants for these initial interviews, operations staff were encouraged to explain the basic research objectives to as many participants as possible and to solicit volunteers. For these preliminary interviews, I asked that volunteers meet the following criteria: (1) be enrolled in YETP, YCCIP, or YIEPP programs, (2) be under age 20, (3) be interested and able to participate in periodic interviews over an eight month period, and (4) not yet have graduated from high school.

In addition to my desire to talk with as many participants as possible, the decision to hold preliminary interviews with over 150 young people was based on the premise that only a fraction of those participating in the screening sessions would prove to be interested in more extensive involvement in the case study research. I was not prepared for the preliminary interview response. Though participants were told that the Youth Perspectives Project had no bearing on local program opportunities and their involvement in it could in no way improve their immediate circumstances, nearly all who were interviewed expressed an interest in being included in the case study group. Only a handful were unwilling to participate.

I selected a group of case study participants that encompassed a wide mix of personal characteristics. Though I was not concerned with proportional representation of all characteristics found in the broader population of participants, I did want to include in the case study group both male and female participants, whites and non-whites, high school students and school dropouts, youth whose parents were employed as well as youth from welfare families, and young people living at home with parents as well as those living on their own or in other settings. Of particular interest in assembling the case study group was the inclusion of a number of participants with special characteristics that might pose particular barriers to employment, such as single parents, school dropouts who had been out of the labor force for one year or more, Vietnamese immigrants, participants referred from juvenile offender agencies, and young people with histories of alcoholism or drug abuse.

In some respects, I saw the individuals selected for case study as "spokespersons" for different groups as well as unique individuals with their own experiences and perspectives. But while many of their problems and views are representative of broader sub-populations, it would be wrong to assume that the case study participants are necessarily typical of the "average" members of such groups. The intensive interview approach required study subjects who were both willing and able to communicate verbally with the researcher. Though I generally tried to avoid what appeared to be unusual or outstanding participants, I did select young people whose verbal accounts were vivid, or at least coherent, who seemed eager to commit time and energy to the research, and with whom I felt the potential for developing rapport. I also tried to select participants who would be likely to remain available for interviews through at least most of the eight month research period.

Most of the material collected for the case studies was biographical and anecdotal. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to talk about their attitudes and feelings as well as the "facts" of their experience. It was not my intention to push any of the case study participants into a level of disclosure that would produce acute discomfort. The participants were encouraged to be expansive, but they were also told that they did not have to talk about areas of their lives that seemed too personal to share and that they were free to decline response to any questions they preferred not to answer.

The interviews were conducted during site visits to each prime sponsorship, that were spaced at approximately eight week intervals. I tried whenever possible to let case study participants select the interview settings. For most participants, private rooms in program offices, schools, or worksite facilities were the most comfortable and convenient arrangement. It was sometimes difficult to arrange adequate time and space for private interviews without seriously inconveniencing program staffs and participants or disrupting instruction or worksite activities. Both program staffs and participants in the four prime sponsorships were most cooperative in making accommodations for the interviews, but inevitably some interviews were held under less than optimal conditions. One interview was conducted in a car, another in the stairwell of a public office building. A number of case study participants chose to have at least some interview sessions in their own homes.

I tape recorded nearly all of the interview sessions, and I felt it was important to tell participants how the material they provided would be used. I told them transcripts would be made from the interview tapes. I made it clear that I did not work for the agencies or people managing their local program activities. The tapes would not be made available to others or listened to by anyone but myself and the transcript typist. In reporting research findings, I told them that I would use incidents, examples, and direct quotations from their interview transcripts. The case study participants knew their "stories" were likely to be published but their names, and the names of other people and many of the places they discussed, would be changed.

I meant to alleviate any anxiety case study participants might feel by reassuring them that their privacy would not be violated. But many of the participants expressed disappointment that their real names would not appear in print. They also had mixed feelings about my intention to alter the names of their schools, employers, counselors, friends, and others. A number of case study participants were certain that their individual stories were particularly significant, and they were eager that they be told as accurately and forcefully as possible. At our second interview, "Bobby Jones" shook his head doubtfully at my tape recorder and said: "Writing it down from tapes ain't too sure a thing. You might get this wrong, you know? And if it gets into a book, not too many people will probably read it anyway. Next time you come here, why don't you bring a T.V. camera? I want people to see how it really is."

In the selection of case study participants, I drew most heavily from the YETP program, which was the largest, most comprehensive and most diversified of the YEDPA programs within the four prime sponsorships. Only ten of the original 40 case study participants were not YETP enrollees. Of these, seven were enrolled in YCCIP projects, and two were participants in (Boston's) YIEPP demonstration. Females dominated YETP enrollments in three of the four research localities; consequently, there was a broader female population from which to draw case study participants. Twenty-two of the 40 original case study participants were young women.

Four case study participants dropped out of YEDPA programs during the first few months of the research project. They were also dropped from the case study group because they were not available for further interviews. Scheduling problems, illness, and other complications prevented four additional participants from completing full interview cycles. At the end of the research period, in June, 1979, there were 32 participants from whom reasonably complete case study material had been collected in a series of individual interviews. Young men selected as case study participants were, as a group, more mobile than female participants and more likely to drop out of both program activities and the Youth Perspectives Project. Of the eight original case study participants for whom interview cycles were not completed, six were young men. Only 12 of the 32 young people in the final case study group were young men.

Research Response

That young people are vitally interested in the world of work and the ways in which they might fit into this world is attested to by the enthusiasm and commitment of the young men and women who participated in the Youth Perspectives Project. I had expected that lengthy interviews with a strange adult focusing on many different aspects of personal experience would be, at best, viewed as a trial by most teenagers. Involvement in the research project placed considerable demands on the case study participants in regard to time, energy, and exposure. Throughout the eight months of interviewing, I was continually amazed by the responsiveness of the participants--their patience with my interminable stream of questions, their willingness to communicate and to fit the interviews into what were often very busy and complex lives, and their unswerving acceptance that the experiences and issues we discussed were important in a broader context and were worthy of research concern.

My interviews with case study participants were not rigidly structured. Though digressions based on individual interests and experiences were encouraged, the basic questions and subject areas covered in each participant interview series were keyed to a comprehensive format. Areas of inquiry fell into five major categories: (1) Home lives, family backgrounds, roles, and aspirations; (2) Community roles, values, and experiences; (3) School lives and educational experiences; (4) Employment experiences and knowledge, attitudes, and aspirations in regard to the world of work; (5) YEDPA program experiences and their perceived effects on employment, personal development, and career futures.

The interview approach did not work equally well with each case study participant. Some were obviously better able to express themselves and to transmit their experiences and views more clearly than were others. But from the beginning, each case study participant seemed to accept my interest in him or her as valid, and, I believe, each took her or his role in the study seriously enough to at least try to respond honestly and completely to my queries.

Most of the case study participants seemed to enjoy the interviews and to look forward to subsequent sessions. Undoubtedly some of them were stimulated by the novelty of repeated access to an adult who would listen to them without imposing judgment. That someone was interested and concerned enough to document their experiences and views seemed to be particularly important to a number of the participants, who felt alone and badly in need of support and acknowledgement. Several times when the interviewing fell behind schedule, I received collect telephone calls from participants, asking me when I was coming back and reminding me that our next session was past due.

Though some of the participants approached their role as interview subjects more intensely than others, I believe that the process of reflecting, disclosing, and analyzing their own experiences and choices was a productive exercise for most of the young people in the case study group. As Carmeletta DeVries said in our last interview: "I never really thought about some of these things until you asked me about them. Laying it all out helps me get a better picture of where I've been and where I need to go. It's a little scary, but I think I know myself better."

Bonnie Snedeker,
March 21, 1980

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